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M. E. BARRY.













BELL'S EDITION.



T H E

WAY OF THE WORLD.

A C O M E D Y,

As written by WILLIAM CONGREVE.

DISTINGUISHING ALSO THE

VARIATIONS OF THE THEATRE,

AS PERFORMED AT THE

Theatre-Royal in Dury-Lane.

Regulated from the Prompt-Book,

By PERMISSION of the MANAGERS,

By Mr. HOPKINS, Prompter.

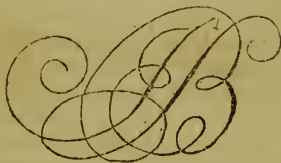
*Audire est operæ pretium, procedere rectè*

*Qui mæchis non vultis. —*

*— Metuat doti deprensa. —*

HOR. sat. 2 l. 7.

1614.



L O N D O N :

Printed for JOHN BELL, near Exeter-Exchange, in the Strand.

MDCCCLXXVII.

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 10th inst. in relation to the above mentioned matter. I have the pleasure to inform you that the same has been forwarded to the proper authorities for their consideration. I am, Sir, very respectfully,  
 Yours obediently,  
 J. M. [Name]

To the Right Honourable

R A L P H,

EARL OF MONTAGUE, &c.

MY LORD,

WHETHER the world will arraign me of vanity or not, that I have presumed to dedicate this comedy to your Lordship, I am yet in doubt; though it may be it is some degree of vanity even to doubt of it. One who has at any time had the honour of your Lordship's conversation, cannot be supposed to think very meanly of that which he would prefer to your perusal: yet it were to incur the imputation of too much sufficiency, to pretend to such a merit as might abide the test of your Lordship's censure.

Whatever value may be wanting to this play while it is mine, will be sufficiently made up to it, when it is once become your Lordship's: and it is my security, that I cannot have over-rated it more by my dedication, than your Lordship will dignify it by your patronage.

That it succeeded on the stage, was almost beyond my expectation; for but little of it was prepared for that general taste which seems now to be predominant in the palates of our audience.

Those characters which are meant to be ridiculed in most of our comedies, are of fools so gross, that, in my humble opinion, they should rather disturb than divert the well-natured and reflecting part of an audience; they are rather objects of charity than contempt; and instead of moving our mirth, they ought very often to excite our compassion.

This reflection moved me to design some characters, which should appear ridiculous, not so much through a natural folly (which is incorrigible, and therefore not proper for the stage) as through an affected wit; a wit which, at the same time that it is affected, is also false. As there is some difficulty in the formation of a character of this nature, so there is some hazard which attends the progress of its success upon the stage; for many come to a play, so over-charged with criticism, that they very often let fly their censure, when, through their rashness, they have mistaken their aim. This I had occasion, lately, to observe; for this play had been acted two or three days, before some of these hasty judges could find the leisure to distinguish betwixt the character of a Witwoud and a Truewit.

I must beg your Lordship's pardon for this digression from the true course of this epistle; but that it may not seem altogether impertinent, I beg that I may plead the occasion of it, in part of that excuse of which I stand in need, for recommending this comedy to your protection. It is only by the countenance of your Lordship, and the few so qualified, that such who write with care and pains can hope to be distinguished: for the prostituted name of poet, promiscuously levels all that bear it.

Terence, the most correct writer in the world, had a Scipio and a Lelius, if not to assist him, at least to support him in his reputation: and, notwithstanding his extraordinary merit, it may be, their countenance was not more than necessary.

The purity of his stile, the delicacy of his turns, and the justness of his characters, were all of them beauties, which the greater part of his audience were incapable of tasting. Some of the coarsest strokes of Plautus, so severely censured by Horace, were more likely to affect the multitude; such who come with expectation to laugh at the last act of a play, and are better entertained with two or three unseasonable jests, than with the artful solution of the fable.

As Terence excelled in his performances, so had he great advantages to encourage his undertakings; for he built most on the foundations of Menander: his plots were generally modelled, and his characters ready drawn to his hand. He copied Menander; and Menander had

no less light in the formation of his characters, from the observations of Theophrastus, of whom he was a disciple; and Theophrastus, it is known, was not only the disciple, but the immediate successor of Aristotle, the first and greatest judge of poetry. These were great models to design by; and the further advantage which Terence possessed, towards giving his plays the due ornaments of purity of style, and justness of manners, was not less considerable, from the freedom of conversation which was permitted him with Lelius and Scipio, two of the greatest and most polite men of his age. And, indeed, the privilege of such a conversation, is the only certain means of attaining to the perfection of dialogue.

If it has happened in any part of this comedy, that I have gained a turn of style, or expression more correct, or at least more corrigible, than in those which I have formerly written, I must, with equal pride and gratitude, ascribe it to the honour of your Lordship's admitting me into your conversation, and that of a society where every body else was so well worthy of you, in your retirement, last summer, from the town; for it was immediately after that this comedy was written. If I have failed in my performance, it is only to be regretted, where there were so many, not inferior either to a Scipio or a Lelius, that that there should be one wanting equal in capacity to a Terence.

If I am not mistaken, poetry is almost the only art which has not yet laid claim to your Lordship's patronage. Architecture and painting, to the great honour of our country, have flourished under your influence and protection. In the mean time, Poetry, the eldest sister of all arts, and parent of most, seems to have resigned her birth-right, by having neglected to pay her duty to your Lordship; and by permitting others of a later extraction to prepossess that place in your esteem, to which none can pretend a better title. Poetry, in its nature, is sacred to the good and great; the relation between them is reciprocal, and they are ever propitious to it. It is the privilege of poetry to address to them, and it is their prerogative alone to give it protection.

This received maxim is a general apology for all writers who consecrate their labours to great men; but I

could wish, at this time, that this address were exempted from the common pretence of all dedications; and as I can distinguish your Lordship even among the most deserving, so this offering might become remarkable by some particular instance of respect, which should assure your Lordship, that I am, with all due sense of your extreme worthiness and humanity,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's most obedient,

And most obliged humble servant,

WILLIAM CONGREVE.



T O

*Mr. CONGREVE;*

OCCASIONED BY HIS

C O M E D Y,

CALLED THE

W A Y O F T H E W O R L D;

**W**HEN pleasure's falling to the low delight,  
 In vain the joys of the uncertain fight;  
 No sense of wit when rude spectators know,  
 But in distorted gesture, farce and show:  
 How could, great author, your aspiring mind  
 Dare to write only to the few refin'd;  
 Yet tho' that nice ambition you pursue,  
 'Tis not in Congreve's power to please but few.  
 Implicitly devoted to his fame,  
 Well-dress'd barbarians know his awful name;  
 Tho' senseless they're of mirth, but when they laugh,  
 As they feel wine, but when till drunk, they quaff.

On you, from fate, a lavish portion fell,  
 In ev'ry way of writing to excel.  
 Your muse applause to Arabella brings,  
 In notes as sweet as Arabella sings.  
 Whene'er you draw an undissembled woe,  
 With sweet distress your rural numbers flow.  
 Pastora's the complaint of ev'ry swain,  
 Pastora still the echo of the plain!  
 Or if your muse describe, with warming force,  
 The wounded Frenchman falling from his horse;

And

And her own William glorious in the strife,  
 Bestowing on the prostrate foe his life :  
 You the great act as gen'rously rehearse,  
 And all the English fury's in your verse.  
 By your selected scenes, and handsome choice,  
 Ennobled Comedy exalts her voice ;  
 You check unjust esteem, and fond desire,  
 And teach to scorn what else we should admire ;  
 The just impresson taught by you we bear.  
 The player acts the world, the world the play'r ;  
 Whom still that world unjustly disesteems,  
 Tho' he, alone, professes what he seems :  
 But when your muse assumes her tragic part,  
 She conquers and she reigns in ev'ry heart ;  
 To mourn with her men cheat their private woe,  
 And gen'rous pity's all the grief they know.  
 The widow, who impatient of delay,  
 From the town-joys must mask it to the play,  
 Joins with your Mourning Bride's resistless moan,  
 And weeps a loss she slighted, when her own.  
 You give us torment, and you give us ease,  
 And vary our afflictions as you please.  
 Is not a heart so kind as yours in pain,  
 To load your friends with cares you only feign ;  
 Your friends in grief, compos'd yourself, to leave ?  
 But 'tis the only way you'll e'er deceive.  
 Then still, great Sir, your moving pow'r employ,  
 To lull our sorrow, and correct our joy.

R. STEELE.



## P R O L O G U E.

OF those few fools who with ill stars are curst,  
 Sure scribbling fools, call'd poets, fare the worst ;  
 For they're a set of fools which Fortune makes,  
 And after she has made them fools, forsakes.  
 With Nature's oafs 'tis quite a diff'rent case,  
 For Fortune favours all her idiot-race ;  
 In her own nest the cuckoo-eggs we find,  
 O'er which she broods to hatch the changeling-kind.  
 No portion for her own she has to spare,  
 So much she doats on her adopted care.

Poets are bubbles, by the town drawn in,  
 Suffer'd at first some trifling stakes to win :  
 But what unequal hazards do they run !  
 Each time they write, they venture all they've won :  
 The 'squire that's butter'd still, is sure to be undone.  
 This author, heretofore, has found your favour ;  
 But pleads no merit from his past behaviour.  
 To build on that might prove a vain presumption,  
 Should grants, to poets made, admit resumption :  
 And in Parnassus he must lose his seat,  
 If that be found a forfeited estate.

He owns with toil he wrought the following scenes ;  
 But if they're naught, ne'er spare him for his pains :  
 Damn him the more ; have no commiseration  
 For dulness on mature deliberation.

He swears he'll not resent one hiss'd-off scene,  
 Nor, like those peevish wits, his play maintain,  
 Who, to assert their sense, your taste arraign.  
 Some plot we think he has, and some new thought ;  
 Some humour too, no farce ; but that's a fault.  
 Satire, he thinks, you ought not to expect ;  
 For so reform'd a town, who dares correct ?  
 To please, this time, has been his sole pretence ;  
 He'll not instruct, lest it should give offence.  
 Should he, by chance, a knave or fool expose,  
 That hurts none here—sure here are none of those.  
 In short, our play shall (with your leave to shew it)  
 Give you one instance of a passive poet,  
 Who to your judgments yields all resignation,  
 To save or damn, after your own discretion.

## D R A M A T I S P E R S O N Æ.

## M E N.

*Drury-Lane.**Covent-Garden.**Fainall*, in love withMrs. *Marwood*,

Mr. Reddish.

Mr. Wroughton.

*Mirabell*, in love withMrs. *Millamant*,

Mr. Smith.

Mr. Lewis.

*Witwoud*, { follow-  
*Petulant*, { ers of  
                  { Mill. }

Mr. King.

Mr. Lee Lewes.

Mr. Baddeley.

Mr. Woodward.

*Sir Wilful Witwoud*,halfbrother to *Wit-**woud*, and nephewto Lady *Wishfort*.

Mr. Yates.

Mr. Dunstall.

*Waitwell*, servant to*Mirabell*,

Mr. Parsons.

Mr. Wilson.

## W O M E N.

Lady *Wishfort*, ene-my to *Mirabell*, for

having falsely pre-

tended love to her,

Mrs. Hopkins.

Mrs. Pitt.

Mrs. *Millamant*, a

fine lady, niece to

Lady *Wishfort*, andloves *Mirabell*,

Mrs. Abington.

Mrs. Barry.

Mrs. *Marwood*, friendto Mr. *Fainall*, andlikes *Mirabell*.

Miss Sherry.

Mrs. Mattocks.

Mrs. *Fainall*, daugh-ter to Lady *Wish-**fort*, and wife to*Fainall*,

Mrs. Greville.

Mrs. Whitefield.

*Foible*, woman to La-dy *Wishfort*,

Miss Pope.

Mrs. Green.

*Mincing*, woman toMrs. *Millamant*,

Miss Platt.

Mrs. Pouffin.

Dancers, Footmen, and Attendants.

## S C E N E, L O N D O N.

The Time equal to that of the Presentation.

T H E  
WAY OF THE WORLD.

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\* \* \* *The lines distinguished by inverted comas, 'thus,' are omitted in the Representation, and those printed in Italics are the additions of the Theatre.*

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A C T I.

SCENE I. *A Chocolate-house.*

Mirabell and Fainall [*rising from cards*] Betty *waiting.*

M I R A B E L L.

**Y**OU are a fortunate man, Mr. Fainall.

*Fain.* Have we done?

*Mira.* What you please. I'll play on to entertain you.

*Fain.* No, I'll give you your revenge another time, when you are not so indfferent; you are thinking of something else now, and play too negligently; the coldness of a losing gamester, lessens the pleasure of the winner. I'd no more play with a man that slighted his ill fortune, than I'd make love to a woman who undervalued the loss of her reputation.

*Mira.* You have a taste extremely delicate, and are for refining your pleasures.

*Fain.* Pr'ythee, why so reserv'd? Something has put you out of humour.

*Mira.* Not at all: I happen to be grave to-day; and you are gay; that's all.

*Fain.* Confess, Millamant and you quarrell'd last night, after I left you; my fair cousin has some humours that would tempt the patience of a stoick. What, some coxcomb came in, and was well received by her, while you were by.

*Mira.* Witwoud and Petulant; and what was worse, her

her aunt, your wife's mother, my evil genius; or to sum up all in her own name, my old lady Wishfort came in.——

*Fain.* O there it is then——She has a lasting passion for you, and with reason——What, then my wife was there?

*Mira.* Yes, and Mrs. Marwood, and three or four more, whom I never saw before; seeing me, they all put on their grave faces, whisper'd one another; then complain'd aloud of the vapours, and after fell into a profound silence.

*Fain.* They had a mind to be rid of you.

*Mira.* For which reason I resolv'd not to stir. At last the good old lady broke through her painful taciturnity, with an invective against long visits. I would not have understood her, but Millamant joining in the argument, I rose, and with a constrained smile told her, I thought nothing was so easy as to know when a visit began to be troublesome; she reddened and I withdrew, without expecting her reply.

*Fain.* You were to blame to resent what she spoke only in compliance with her aunt.

*Mira.* She is more mistress of herself than to be under the necessity of such resignation.

*Fain.* What! tho' half her fortune depends upon her marrying with my lady's approbation?

*Mira.* I was then in such a humour, that I should have been better pleas'd if she had been less discreet.

*Fain.* Now I remember, I wonder not they were weary of you; last night was one of their cabal nights; they have them three times a week, and meet by turns, at one another's apartments, where they come together like the coroner's inquest, to sit upon the murder'd reputations of the week. You and I are excluded; and it was once propos'd that all the male sex should be excepted; but somebody mov'd, that to avoid scandal, there might be one man of the community; upon which motion Witwood and Petulant were enrolled members.

*Mira.* And who may have been the foundress of this sect? My Lady Wishfort, I warrant, who publishes her detestation of mankind; and full of the vigour of fifty-

five, declares for a friend and ratafia ; and let pſterity ſhift for itſelf, ſhe'll breed no more.

*Fain.* The diſcovery of your ſham addreſſes to her, to conceal you love to her niece, has provoked this ſeparation : had you diſſembled better, things might have continued in the ſtate of nature.

*Mira.* I did as much as man could, with any reaſonable conſcience ; I proceeded to the very laſt act of flattery with her, and was guilty of a ſong in her commendation. Nay, I got a friend to put her into a lampoon, and compliment her with the imputation of an affair with a young fellow, which I carried ſo far, that I told her the malicious town took notice that ſhe was grown fat of a ſudden ; and when ſhe lay in of a dropſy, perſuaded her ſhe was reported to be in labour. The devil's in't if an old woman is to be flattered farther, unleſs a man ſhould endeavour downright perſonally to debauch her ; and that my virtue forbade me. But for the diſcovery of this amour, I am indebted to your friend, or your wife's friend, Mrs. Marwood.

*Fain.* What ſhould provoke her to be your enemy, unleſs ſhe has made you advances which you have ſlighted ? Women do not eaſily forgive omiſſions of that nature.

*Mira.* She was always civil to me, till of late ; I confeſs I am not one of thoſe coxcombs who are apt to interpret a woman's good manners to her prejudice ; and think that ſhe who does not reſuſe 'em ev'ry thing, can reſuſe 'em nothing.

*Fain.* You are a gallant man, Mirabell ; and tho' you may have cruelty enough not to ſatiſfy a lady's longing ; you have too much generoſity, not to be tender of her honour. Yet you ſpeak with an indifference which ſeems to be affected ; and confeſſes you are conſcious of a negligence.

*Mira.* You purſue the argument with a diſtruſt that ſeems to be unaffected, and confeſs you are conſcious of a concern for which the lady is more indebted to you, than is your wife.

*Fain.* Fy, fy, friend, if you grow cenſorious, I muſt leave you——I'll look upon the gameſters in the next room.

*Mira.* Who are they ?

*Fain.* Petulant and Witwood—Bring me some chocolate.

[*Exit.*

*Mira.* Betty, what says our clock?

*Bet.* Turn'd of the last canonical hour, Sir.

*Mira.* How pertinently the jade answers me! Ha! almost one o'clock! [*Looking on his watch*] Oh, y'aré come——

*Enter Footman.*

*Mira.* Well; is the grand affair over? You have been something tedious.

*Serv.* Sir, there's such coupling at Pancras, that they stand behind one another, as 'twere in a country dance. Ours was the last couple to lead up; and no hopes appearing of dispatch, besides, the parson growing hoarse, we were afraid his lungs would have failed before it came to our turn; so we drove round to Duke's Place; and there they were rivetted in a trice.

*Mira.* So, so, you are sure they are married.

*Serv.* Married and bedded, Sir: I am witness.

*Mira.* Have you the certificate?

*Serv.* Here it is, Sir.

*Mira.* Has the Taylor brought Waitwell's clothes home, and the new liveries?

*Serv.* Yes, Sir.'

*Mira.* That's well. Do you go home again, d'ye hear, and adjourn the consummation 'till farther order; bid Waitwell shake his ears, and dame Partlet ruffle up her feathers, and meet me at one o'clock by Rosamond's pond; that I may see her before she returns to her lady: and, as you tender your ears, be secret. [*Exit Footman.*

*Enter Fainall,*

*Fain.* Joy of your success, Mirabell; you look pleas'd.

*Mira.* Ay; I have been engaged in a matter of some sort of mirth, which is not yet ripe for discovery. I am glad this is not a cabal-night. I wonder, Fainall, that you who are married, and of consequence should be discreet, will suffer your wife to be of such a party.

*Fain.* Faith, I am not jealous. Besides, most who are engaged, are women and relations; and for the men, they are of a kind too contemptible to give scandal.

*Mira.* I am of another opinion. The greater the coxcomb, always the more the scandal: for a woman who is not  
a fool,

a fool, can have but one reason for associating with a man who is one.

*Fain.* Are you jealous as often as you see Witwoud entertained by Millamant?

*Mira.* Of her understanding I am, if not of her person.

*Fain.* You do her wrong; for to give her her due, she has wit.

*Mira.* She has beauty enough to make any man think so; and complaisance enough not to contradict him who shall tell her so.

*Fain.* For a passionate lover, methinks you are a man somewhat too discerning in the failings of your mistress.

*Mira.* And for a discerning man, somewhat too passionate a lover; for I like her with all her faults; nay like her for her faults. Her follies are so natural, or so artful, that they become her; and those affectations which in another woman would be odious, serve but to make her more agreeable. I'll tell thee, Fainall, she once used me with that insolence, that in revenge I took her to pieces; sifted her, and separated her failings; 'I studied 'em and 'got 'em by rote. The catalogue was so large, that I 'was not without hopes, one day or other, to hate her 'heartily: to which end I so used myself to think of 'em, 'that at length, contrary to my design and expectation, 'they gave me every hour less and less disturbance; 'till 'in a few days it became habitual to me, to remember 'em without being displeas'd.' They are now grown as familiar to me as my own frailties; and in all probability in a little time longer, I shall like 'em as well.

*Fain.* Marry her, marry her; be half as well acquainted with her charms, as you are with her defects, and my life on't you are your own man again.

*Mira.* Say you so?

*Fain.* I, I, I have experience; I have a wife, and so forth.

*Enter a Messenger.*

*Mess.* Is one squire Witwoud here?

*Bet.* Yes; what's your business?

*Mess.* I have a letter for him, from his brother Sir Wilful, which I am charged to deliver into his own hands.

*Bet.* He's in the next room, friend——That way.

[*Exit Messenger.*

*Mira.* What, is the chief of that noble family in town, Sir Wilful Witwoud?

*Fain.* He is expected to-day. Do you know him?

*Mira.* I have seen him, he promises to be an extraordinary person; I think you have the honour to be related to him.

*Fain.* Yes; he is half brother to this Witwoud by a former wife, who was sister to my Lady Wishfort, my wife's mother. If you marry Millamant, you must call cousins too.

*Mira.* I had rather be his relation than his acquaintance.

*Fain.* He comes to town in order to equip himself for travel.

*Mira.* For travel! Why the man that I mean is above forty.

*Fain.* No matter for that; 'tis for the honour of England, that all Europe should know we have blockheads of all ages.

*Mira.* I wonder there is not an act of parliament to save the credit of the nation, and prohibit the exportation of fools.

*Fain.* By no means, 'tis better as 'tis; 'tis better to trade with a little loss, than to be quite eaten up with being overstocked.

*Mira.* Pray, are the follies of this knight-errant, and those of the squire his brother, any thing related?

*Fain.* Not at all; Witwoud grows by the knight, like a medlar grafted on a crab. One will melt in your mouth, and t'other set your teeth on edge; one is all pulp, and the other all core.

*Mira.* So one will be rotten before he be ripe, and 'the other will be rotten without ever being ripe at all.'

*Fain.* Sir Wilful is an odd mixture of bashfulness and obstinacy.—But when he's drunk, he's as loving as the monster in the Tempest; and much after the same manner. To give t'other his due, he has something of good-nature, and does not always want wit.

*Mira.* Not always; but as often as his memory fails him, and his common-place of comparisons. He is a fool with a good memory, and some few scraps of other folk's



folk's wit. He is one, whose conversation can never be approved, yet it is now and then to endure. He has indeed one good quality, he is not exceptious; 'for he so passionately affects the reputation of understanding raillery, that he will construe an affront into a jest; and call downright rudeness and ill language, satire and fire.'

*Fain.* If you have a mind to finish his picture, you have an opportunity to do it at full length. Behold the original.

*Enter Witwoud.*

*Wit.* Afford me your compassion, my dears; pity me, Fainall; Mirabell, pity me.

*Mira.* I do from my soul.

*Fain.* Why, what's the matter?

*Wit.* No letters for me, Betty?

*Bet.* Did not a messenger bring you one but now, Sir?

*Wit.* Ay, but no other?

*Bet.* No, Sir.

*Wit.* That's hard, that's very hard — A messenger, a mule, a beast of burden, he has brought me a letter from the fool my brother, as heavy as a panegyric in a funeral sermon, or a copy of commendatory verses from one poet to another; and what's worse, 'tis as sure a forerunner of the author, as an epistle dedicatory.

*Mira.* A fool, and your brother, Witwoud!

*Wit.* Ay, ay, my half brother, my half brother; he is no nearer, upon honour.

*Mira.* Then 'tis possible he may be but half a soul.

*Wit.* Good, good, Mirabell, *le drole!* Good, good; hang him, don't let's talk of him. — Fainall, how does your lady? Gad, I say any thing in the world to get this fellow out of my head. I beg pardon that I should ask a man of pleasure, and the town, a question at once so foreign and domestic. But I talk like an old maid at a marriage; I don't know what I say: but she's the best woman in the world.

*Fain.* 'Tis well you don't know what you say, or else your commendation would go near to make me either vain or jealous.

*Wit.* No man in town lives well with a wife but Fainall. Your judgment, Mirabell?

*Mira.* You had better step and ask his wife, if you would be credibly informed.

*Wit.* Mirabell.

*Mira.* Ay.

*Wit.* My dear, I ask ten thousand pardons:—Gad I have forgot what I was going to say to you.

*Mir.* I thank you heartily, heartily.

*Wit.* No, but pr'ythee excuse me,—my memory is such a memory.

*Mira.* Have a care of such apologies, Witwoud;—for I never knew a fool but he affected to complain, either of the spleen or his memory.

*Fain.* What have you done with Petulant?

*Wit.* He's reckoning his money,—my money it was—I have no luck to-day.

*Fain.* You may allow him to win of you at play;—for you are sure to be too hard for him at repartee: since you monopolize the wit that is between you, the fortune must be his of course.

*Mira.* I don't find that Petulant confesses the superiority of wit to be your talent, Witwoud.

*Wit.* Come, come, you are malicious now, and would breed debates—Petulant's my friend, and a very honest fellow, and a very pretty fellow, and has a smattering—Faith and troth, a pretty deal of an odd sort of a small wit: nay, I'll do him justice. I'm his friend, I won't wrong him—And if he had any judgment in the world,—he would not be altogether contemptible. Come, come, don't detract from the merits of my friend.

*Fain.* You don't take your friend to be over-nicely bred.

*Wit.* No, no, hang him, the rogue has no manners at all, that I must own—No more breeding than a bum-baily, that I grant you—'Tis pity; the fellow has fire and life.

*Mira.* What, courage?

*Wit.* Hum, faith I don't know as to that,—I can't say as to that—Yes, faith, in controversy, he'll contradict any body.

*Mira.* Though 'twere a man whom he feared, or a woman whom he loved:

† *Wit.* Well, well, he does not always think before he speaks;—we have all our failings: you are too hard upon  
- him,

him, you are faith. Let me excuse him, — I can defend most of his faults, except one or two: one he has, that's the truth on't; if he were my brother, I could not acquit him — That indeed I could wish were otherwise.

*Mira.* Ay, marry; what's that, Witwoud?

*Wit.* Oh, pardon me — Expose the infirmities of my friend. — No, my dear, excuse me there.

*Fain.* What I warrant he's insincere, or 'tis some such trifle.

*Wit.* No, no, what if he be? 'Tis no matter for that, his wit will excuse that: a wit should no more be sincere, than a woman constant; one argues a decay of parts, as t'other of beauty.

*Mira.* May be you think him too positive?

*Wit.* No, no, his being positive is an incentive to argument, and keeps up conversation.

*Fain.* Too illiterate.

*Wit.* That, that's his happiness — His want of learning gives him the more opportunity to shew his natural parts.

*Mira.* He wants words.

*Wit.* Ay; but I like him for that now; for his want of words gives me the pleasure very often to explain his meaning.

*Fain.* He's impudent.

*Wit.* No, that's not it.

*Mira.* Vain.

*Wit.* No.

*Mira.* What, he speaks unseasonable truths sometimes, because he has not wit enough to invent an evasion.

*Wit.* Truths! Ha, ha, ha! No, no; since you will have it — I mean, he never speaks truth at all — that's all. He will lie like a chambermaid, or a woman of quality's porter. Now that is a fault.

*Enter Coachman.*

*Coach.* Is master Petulant here, mistress?

*Bet.* Yes.

*Coach.* Three gentlewomen in a coach would speak with him.

*Fain.* Oh, brave Petulant! Three!

*Bet.*

*Bet.* I'll tell him.

[*Exit.*

' *Coach.* You must bring two dishes of chocolate and a glass of cinnamon-water.

[*Exit.*

' *Wit.* That should be for two fasting strumpets, and a bawd troubled with wind. Now you may know what the three are.

' *Mira.* You are very free with your friend's acquaintance.

*Wit.* ' Ay, ay, friendship without freedom is as dull as love without enjoyment, or wine without toasting; but to tell you a secret,' these are trulls whom he allows coach hire, and something more, by the week, to call on him once a day at public places.

' *Mira.* How!

*Wit.* You shall see he won't go to 'em, because there's no more company here to take notice of him.—Why this is nothing to what he used to do:—before he found out this way, I have known him call for himself—

*Fain.* Call for himself! What dost thou mean?

*Wit.* Mean! why he would slip you out of this chocolate-house, just when you had been talking to him—As soon as your back was turned—whip he was gone;—then trip to his lodging, clap on a hood and scarf, and a mask, flap into a hackney-coach, and drive hither to the door again in a trice; where he would send in for himself; that is, I mean, call for himself, wait for himself; nay, and what's more, not finding himself, sometimes leave a letter for himself.

*Mira.* I confess this is something extraordinary—I believe he waits for himself now, he is so long a coming:—Oh, I ask his pardon.

*Enter Betty.*

*Bet.* Sir, the coach stays.

*Enter Petulant.*

*Pet.* Well, well; I come;—'Sbud, a man had as good be a professed midwife, as a professed whoremaster, at this rate; to be knocked up, and raised at all hours, and in all places. Pox on them, I won't come—D'ye hear, tell them I won't come—Let them snivel and cry their hearts out.

*Fain.* You are very cruel, Petulant.

*Pet.* All's one, let it pass—I have a humour to be cruel.

*Mira.* I hope they are not persons of condition that you use at this rate.

*Pet.* Condition! condition's a dried fig, if I am not in humour——' By this hand, if they were your—a—a  
'—your what-dee-call-'ems themselves, they must wait  
'or rub off, if I want appetite.

' *Mira.* What-dee-call-'ems! What are they, Witwoud?

' *Wit.* Empreffes, my dear——By your what-dee-call-'ems, he means Sultana queens.

' *Pet.* Ay, Roxana's.

' *Mira.* Cry your mercy.

' *Fain.* Witwoud says they are——

' *Pet.* What does he say they are?

' *Wit.* I! fine ladies, I say.

' *Pet.* Pass on, Witwoud——Harkee, by this light  
'his relations—Two co-heireffes his cousins, and an old  
'aunt, who loves catterwauling better than a conventicle.

' *Wit.* Ha, ha, ha! I had a mind to see how the rogue  
'would come off—Ha, ha, ha! gad, I can't be angry  
'with him, if he had said they were my mother and my  
'sisters.

' *Mira.* No.

' *Wit.* No; the rogue's wit and readines of invention charm me; dear Petulant.'

*Bet.* They are gone, Sir, in great anger.

*Pet.* Enough, let them trundle. Anger helps complexion, saves paint.

*Fain.* This continence is all dissembled; this is in order to have something to brag of the next time he makes court to Millamant, and swear he has abandoned the whole sex for her sake.

*Mira.* Have you not left off your impudent pretension there yet? I shall cut your throat, some time or other, Petulant, about that business.

*Pet.* Ay, ay, let that pass——There are other throats to be cut——

*Mira.* Meaning mine, Sir?

*Pet.* Not I—I mean nobody—I know nothing——But there are uncles and nephews in the world—and they may be rivals—What then, all's one for that—

*Mira.*

*Mira.* Now, harkee, Petulant, come hither—Explain, or I shall call your interpreter.

*Pet.* Explain; I know nothing—Why you have an uncle, have you not, lately come to town, and lodges by my lady Wishfort's?

*Mira.* True.

*Pet.* Why, that's enough—You and he are not friends; and if he should marry and have a child, you may be disinherited, ha?

*Mira.* Where hast thou stumbled upon all this truth?

*Pet.* All's one for that; why then say I know something.

*Mira.* Come, thou art an honest fellow, Petulant, and shalt make love to my mistress, thou sha't, faith. What hast thou heard of my uncle?

*Pet.* I! nothing I. If throats are to be cut, let swords clash; snug's the word, I shrug and am silent.

*Mira.* Oh, raillery, raillery. Come, I know thou art in the women's secrets—What, you're a cabalift; I know you staid at Millamant's last night, after I went. Was there any mention made of my uncle, or me? Tell me. If thou hadst but good-nature equal to thy wit, Petulant, Tony Witwoud, who is now thy competitor in fame, would shew as dim by thee as a dead whiting's eye by a pearl of orient; he would no more be seen by thee, than Mercury is by the sun. Come, I'm sure thou wo't tell me.

*Pet.* If I do, will you grant me common sense then, for the future?

*Mira.* Faith, I'll do what I can for thee, and I'll pray that Heaven may grant it thee in the mean time.

*Pet.* Well, harkee.

*Fain.* Petulant and you both will find Mirabell as warm a rival as a lover.

*Wit.* Psha, psha, that she laughs at Petulant is plain. And for my part—But that it is almost a fashion to admire her, I should—Harkee—To tell you a secret, but let it go no farther—Between friends, I shall never break my heart for her.

*Fain.* How!

*Wit.* She's handsome; but she's a sort of an uncertain woman.

*Fain.*

*Fain.* I thought you had died for her.

*Wit.* Umph—No——

*Fain.* She has wit.

*Wit.* 'Tis what she will hardly allow any body else—  
Now, demme, I should hate that, if she were as handsome as Cleopatra. Mirabell is not so sure of her as he thinks for.

*Fain.* Why do you think so?

*Wit.* We staid pretty late there last night ; and heard something of an uncle to Mirabell, who is lately come to town,—and is between him and the best part of his estate ; Mirabell and he are at some distance, as my lady Wishfort has been told ; and you know she hates Mirabell worse than a Quaker hates a parrot, or than a fish-monger hates a hard frost. Whether this uncle has seen Mrs. Millamant or not, I cannot say ; but there were items of such a treaty being in embryo ; and if it should come to life, poor Mirabell would be in some sort unfortunately fobbed, i'faith.

*Fain.* 'Tis impossible Millamant should hearken to it.

*Wit.* Faith, my dear, I can't tell ; she's a woman, and a kind of a humourist.

*Mira.* And this is the sum of what you could collect last night.

*Pet.* The quintessence. May be Witwoud knows more, he staid longer——Besides, they never mind him ; they say any thing before him.

*Mira.* I thought you had been the greatest favourite.

*Pet.* Ay, *tête-à-tête* ; but not in public, because I make remarks.

*Mira.* You do ?

*Pet.* Ay, ay ; pox, I'm malicious, man. Now he's soft, you know ; they are not in awe of him——The fellow's well bred ; he's what you call a———What-dee-call-'em, a fine gentleman : but he's silly withal.

*Mira.* I thank you, I know as much as my curiosity requires. Fainall, are you for the Mall ?

*Fain.* Ay, I'll take a turn before dinner.

*Wit.* Ay, we'll all walk in the park ; the ladies talked of being there.

*Mira.* I thought you were obliged to watch for your brother, Sir Willful's arrival.

*Wit.*

*Wit.* No, no; he comes to his aunt's, my lady Wishfort: pox on him, I shall be troubled with him too; what shall I do with the fool?

*Pet.* Beg him for his estate, that I may beg you afterwards; and so have but one trouble with you both.

*Wit.* Oh, rare Petulant; thou art as quick as fire in a frosty morning; thou shalt to the Mall with us, and we'll be very severe.

*Pet.* Enough, I'm in a humour to be severe.

*Mira.* Are you? Pray then walk by yourselves—Let not us be necessary to your putting the ladies out of countenance with your senseless ribaldry, which you roar out aloud as often as they pass by you; and when you have made a handsome woman blush, then you think you have been severe.

*Pet.* What, what? Then let them either shew their innocence by not understanding what they hear, or else shew their discretion by not hearing what they would not be thought to understand.

*Mira.* But hast not thou then sense enough to know that thou oughtest to be most ashamed thyself, when thou hast put another out of countenance?

*Pet.* Not I, by this hand——I always take blushing either for a sign of guilt or ill breeding.

*Mira.* I confess you ought to think so. You are in the right, that you may plead the error of your judgment in defence of your practice.

Where modesty's ill-manners, 'tis but fit  
That impudence and malice pass for wit.

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

## A C T II.

SCENE, *St. James's Park.*

*Mrs. Fainall and Mrs. Marwood.*

*Mrs. FAINALL.*

**A**Y, ay, dear Marwood, if we will be happy, we must find the means in ourselves, and among ourselves. Men are ever in extremes; either doating, or averse. While they are lovers, if they have fire and sense, their  
jealousies



jealousies are insupportable: and when they cease to love (we ought to think at least) they loathe; they look upon us with horror and distaste; they meet us like the ghosts of what we were, and as from such, fly from us.

*Mrs. Mar.* True, 'tis an unhappy circumstance of life, that love should ever die before us; and that the man so often should outlive the lover. But say what you will, 'tis better to be left than never to have been lov'd. To pass our youth in dull indifference, to refuse the sweets of life, because they once must leave us, is as preposterous, as to wish to have been born old, because we one day must be old. For my part, my youth may wear and waste, but it shall never rust in my possession.

*Mrs. Fain.* Then it seems you dissemble an aversion to mankind, only in compliance to my mother's humour.

*Mrs. Mar.* Certainly. To be free; I have no taste of those insipid dry discourses, with which our sex of force must entertain themselves, apart from men. We may affect endearments to each other, profess eternal friendships, and seem to doat like lovers; but 'tis not in our natures long to persevere. Love will resume his empire in our breasts, and every heart, or soon or late, receive and re-admit him as its lawful tyrant.

*Mrs. Fain.* Bless me, how have I been deceived! Why you profess a libertine.

*Mrs. Mar.* You see my friendship by my freedom. Come, be as sincere, acknowledge that your sentiments agree with mine.

*Mrs. Fain.* Never.

*Mrs. Mar.* You hate mankind?

*Mrs. Fain.* Heartily, inveterately.

*Mrs. Mar.* Your husband?

*Mrs. Fain.* Most transcendently; ay, though I say it, meritoriously.

*Mrs. Mar.* Give me your hand upon it.

*Mrs. Fain.* There.

*Mrs. Mar.* I join with you; what I have said has been to try you.

*Mrs. Fain.* Is it possible? Dost thou hate those vipers, men?

*Mrs. Mar.* I have done hating 'em, and am now come

to despise 'em; the next thing I have to do, is eternally to forget 'em.

*Mrs. Fain.* There spoke the spirit of an Amazon, a Penthesilea.

*Mrs. Mar.* And yet I am thinking sometimes to carry my aversion farther.

*Mrs. Fain.* How?

*Mrs. Mar.* Faith, by marrying; ' if I could but find ' one that loved me very well, and would be thoroughly ' sensible of ill usage, I think I should do myself the ' violence of undergoing the ceremony.

' *Mrs. Fain.* You would not make him a cuckold?

' *Mrs. Mar.* No; but I'd make him believe I did, and ' that's as bad.

' *Mrs. Fain.* Why had you not as good do it?

' *Mrs. Mar.* Oh, if he should ever discover it, he ' would then know the worst, and be out of his pain; ' but I would have him ever to continue upon the rack of ' fear and jealousy.

' *Mrs. Fain.* Ingenious mischief! Would thou wert married to Mirabell.

*Mrs. Mar.* Would I were.

*Mrs. Fain.* You change colour.

*Mrs. Mar.* Because I hate him.

*Mrs. Fain.* So do I; but I can hear him named. But what reason have you to hate him in particular?

*Mrs. Mar.* I never loved him; he is, and always was, insufferably proud.

' *Mrs. Fain.* By the reason you give for your aversion, one would think it dissembled; for you have laid a fault to his charge, of which his enemies must acquit him.

*Mrs. Mar.* Oh, then it seems you are one of his favourable enemies. Methinks you look a little pale, and now you flush again.

*Mrs. Fain.* Do I? I think I am a little sick o' the sudden.

*Mrs. Mar.* What ails you?

*Mrs. Fain.* My husband. Don't you see him? He turned short upon me unawares, and has almost overcome me.

*Enter Fainall and Mirabell.*

*Mrs. Mar.* Ha, ha, ha! he comes opportunely for you.

*Mrs.*

*Mrs. Fain.* For you, for he has brought Mirabell with him.

*Fain.* My dear.

*Mrs. Fain.* My soul.

*Fain.* You don't look well to-day, child.

*Mrs. Fain.* D'ye think so?

*Mira.* He's the only man that does, Madam.

*Mrs. Fain.* The only man that would tell me so at least; and the only man from whom I could hear it without mortification.

*Fain.* Oh, my dear, I am satisfied of your tenderness: I know you cannot resent any thing from me; especially what is an effect of my concern.

*Mrs. Fain.* Mr. Mirabell, my mother interrupted you in a pleasant relation last night, I would fain hear it out.

*Mira.* The persons concerned in that affair, have yet a tolerable reputation.—I am afraid Mr. Fainall will be censorious.

*Mrs. Fain.* He has a humour more prevailing than his curiosity, and will willingly dispense with the hearing of one scandalous story, to avoid giving an occasion to make another, by being seen to walk with his wife. This way, Mr. Mirabell, and I dare promise you will oblige us both.

[*Exeunt Mira. and Mrs. Fain.*]

*Fain.* Excellent creature! Well, sure if I should live to be rid of my wife, I should be a miserable man.

*Mrs. Mar.* Ay?

*Fain.* For having only that one hope, the accomplishment of it, of consequence, must put an end to all my hopes; and what a wretch is he who must survive his hopes! Nothing remains, when that day comes, but to sit down and weep like Alexander, when he wanted other worlds to conquer.

*Mrs. Mar.* Will you not follow them.

*Fain.* Faith, I think not.

*Mrs. Mar.* Pray let us; I have a reason.

*Fain.* You are not jealous?

*Mrs. Mar.* Of whom?

*Fain.* Of Mirabell.

*Mrs. Mar.* If I am, is it inconsistent with my love to you, that I am tender of your honour?

*Fain.* You would intimate then, as if there were a fellow-feeling between my wife and him.

*Mrs. Mar.* I think she does not hate him to that degree she would be thought.

*Fain.* But he, I fear, is too insensible.

*Mrs. Mar.* It may be you are deceived.

*Fain.* It may be so. I do not now begin to apprehend it.

*Mrs. Mar.* What?

*Fain.* That I have been deceived, Madam, and you are false.

*Mrs. Mar.* That I am false! What mean you?

*Fain.* To let you know, I see through all your little arts—Come, you both love him; and both have equally dissembled your aversion. Your mutual jealousies of one another, have made you clash till you have both struck fire. I have seen the warm confession reddening on your cheeks, and sparkling from your eyes.

*Mrs. Mar.* You do me wrong.

*Fain.* I do not——'Twas for my ease to oversee and wilfully neglect the gross advances made him by my wife; that by permitting her to be engaged, I might continue unsuspected in my pleasures; and take you oftener to my arms in full security. But could you think, because the nodding husband would not wake, that e'er the watchful lover slept?

*Mrs. Mar.* And wherewithal can you reproach me?

*Fain.* With infidelity, with loving another, with love of Mirabell.

*Mrs. Mar.* 'Tis false. I challenge you to shew an instance that can confirm your groundless accusation. I hate him.

*Fain.* And wherefore do you hate him? He is insensible, and your resentment follows his neglect. An instance! The injuries you have done him are a proof: your interposing in his love. What cause had you to make discoveries of his pretended passion? to undeceive the credulous aunt, and be the officious obstacle of his match with Milla-mant?

*Mrs. Mar.* My obligations to my lady urged me: I had professed a friendship to her; and could not see her easy nature so abused by that dissembler.

*Fain.*

*Fain.* What, was it conscience then? Professed a friendship! Oh, the pious friendships of the female sex!

*Mrs. Mar.* More tender, more sincere, and more enduring, than all the vain and empty vows of men, whether professing love to us, or mutual faith to one another.

*Fain.* Ha, ha, ha! you are my wife's friend too.

*Mrs. Mar.* Shame and ingratitude! Do you reproach me? You, you, upbraid me! Have I been false to her, through strict fidelity to you, and sacrificed my friendship to keep my love inviolate? And have you the baseness to charge me with the guilt, unmindful of the merit? To you it should be meritorious, that I have been vicious: and do you reflect that guilt upon me, which should lie buried in your bosom?

*Fain.* You misinterpret my reproof. I meant but to remind you of the slight account you once could make of strictest ties, when set in competition with your love to me

*Mrs. Mar.* 'Tis false, you urged it with deliberate malice—I was spoke in scorn, and I never will forgive it.

*Fain.* Your guilt, not your resentment, begets your rage. If yet you loved, you could forgive a jealousy: but you are stung to find you are discovered.

*Mrs. Mar.* It shall be all discovered. You too shall be discovered; be sure you shall. I can but be exposed—If I do it myself I shall prevent your baseness.

*Fain.* Why, what will you do?

*Mrs. Mar.* Disclose it to your wife; own what has past between us.

*Fain.* Frenzy!

*Mrs. Mar.* By all my wrongs I'll do't—I'll publish to the world the injuries you have done me, both in my fame and fortune: with both I trusted you, you bankrupt, in honour, as indigent of wealth.

*Fain.* Your fame I have preserved. Your fortune has been bestowed as the prodigality of your love would have it, in pleasures which we both have shared. Yet, had not you been false, I had ere this repaid it—'Tis true—had you permitted Mirabell with Millamant to have stolen their marriage, my lady had been incensed beyond all means of reconciliation: Millamant had forfeited the moiety of her fortune, which then would have descended

to my wife;—and wherefore did I marry, but to make lawful prize of a rich widow's wealth, and squander it on love and you?

*Mrs. Mar.* Deceit and frivolous pretence.

*Fain.* Death, am I not married? What's pretence? Am I not imprisoned, fettered? Have I not a wife? Nay, a wife that was a widow, a young widow, a handsome widow; and would be again a widow, but that I have a heart of proof, and something of a constitution to hustle through the ways of wedlock, and this world. Will you yet be reconciled to truth and me?

*Mrs. Mar.* Impossible! Truth and you are inconsistent——I hate you, and shall for ever.

*Fain.* For loving you?

*Mrs. Mar.* I loathe the name of love after such usage; and next to the guilt with which you would asperse me, I scorn you most. Farewel.

*Fain.* Nay, we must not part thus.

*Mrs. Mar.* Let me go.

*Fain.* Come, I'm sorry.

*Mrs. Mar.* I care not——Let me go——Break my hands, do——I'd leave them to get loose.

*Fain.* I would not hurt you for the world. Have I no other hold to keep you here?

*Mrs. Mar.* Well, I have deserved it all.

*Fain.* You know I love you.

*Mrs. Mar.* Poor dissembling! Oh, that——Well, it is not yet——

*Fain.* What? What is it not? What is it not yet? It is not yet too late——

*Mrs. Mar.* No, it is not yet too late——I have that comfort.

*Fain.* It is, to love another.

*Mrs. Mar.* But not to loathe, detest, abhor mankind, myself, and the whole treacherous world.

*Fain.* Nay, this is extravagance——Come, I ask your pardon——No tears——I was to blame; I could not love you, and be easy in my doubts——Pray forbear——I believe you; I'm convinced I've done you wrong; and any way, every way will make amends;——I'll hate my wife yet more; damn her, I'll part with her, rob her of all she's worth, and we'll retire somewhere,  
any

any where, to another world—I'll marry thee—Be pacified—'Sdeath, they come! hide your face, your tears—You have a mask, wear it a moment. This way, this way, be persuaded. *[Exeunt.]*

*Enter Mirabel and Mrs. Fainwell.*

*Mrs. Fain.* They are here yet.

*Mira.* They are turning into the other walk.

*Mrs. Fain.* While I only hated my husband, I could bear to see him; but since I have despised him, he's too offensive.

*Mira.* Oh, you should hate with prudence.

*Mrs. Fain.* Yes, for I have loved with indiscretion.

*Mira.* You should have just so much disgust for your husband, as may be sufficient to make you relish your lover.

*Mrs. Fain.* You have been the cause that I have loved without bounds, and would you set limits to that aversion of which you have been the occasion? Why did you make me marry this man?

*Mir.* 'Why do we daily commit disagreeable and dangerous actions? To save that idol reputation. If the familiarities of our loves had produced that consequence, of which you were apprehensive, where could you have fixed a father's name with credit, but on a husband? I knew Fainall to be a man lavish of his morals, an interested and professing friend, a false and a designing lover; yet one whose wit and outward fair behaviour have gained a reputation with the town, enough to make that woman stand excused, who has suffered herself to be won by his addresses. A better man ought not to have been sacrificed to the occasion; a worse had not answered to the purpose.' When you are weary of him, you know your remedy.

*Mrs. Fain.* I ought to stand in some degree of credit with you, Mirabell.

*Mira.* 'In justice to you,' I have made you privy to my whole design, and put it in your power to ruin or advance my fortune.

*Mrs. Fain.* Whom have you instructed to represent your pretended uncle?

*Mira.* Waitwell, my servant.

*Mrs. Fain.* He is an humble servant to Foible, my mother's woman, and may win her to your interest.

*Mira.*

*Mira.* Care is taken for that——She is won and worn by this time. They were married this morning.

*Mrs. Fain.* Who?

*Mira.* Waitwell and Foible. I would not tempt my servant to betray me, by trusting him too far. If your mother, in hopes to ruin me, should consent to marry my pretended uncle, he might, like Mosca in the Fox, stand upon terms, so I made him sure before-hand.

*Mrs. Fain.* So, if my poor mother is caught in a contract, you will discover the imposture betimes; and release her, by producing the certificate of her gallant's former marriage.

*Mira.* Yes, upon condition that she consent to my marriage with her niece, and surrender the moiety of her fortune in her possession.

*Mrs. Fain.* She talk'd last night of endeavouring at a match between Millamant and your uncle.

*Mira.* That was by Foible's direction, and my instruction, that she might seem to carry it more privately.

*Mrs. Fain.* Well, I have an opinion of your success; for I believe my lady will do any thing to get an husband; and when she has this, which you have provided for her, I suppose she will submit to any thing to get rid of him.

*Mira.* Yes, I think the good lady would marry any thing that resembled a man, though 'twere no more than what a butler could pinch out of a napkin.

*Mrs. Fain.* Female frailty! 'We must all come to it, if we live to be old, and feel the craving of a false appetite, when the true is decayed.

'*Mira.* An old woman's appetite is depraved like that of a girl——'Tis the green-sickness of a second childhood; and, like the faint offer of a latter spring, serves but to usher in the fall; and withers in an affected bloom.

'*Mrs. Fain.*' But here's your mistress.

*Enter Mrs. Millamant, Witwoud, and Mincing.*

*Mira.* Here she comes i'faith, full sail, with her fan spread and streamers out, and a shoal of fools for tenders——Ha, no, I cry her mercy.

*Mrs. Fain.* I see but one poor empty sculler; and he tows her woman after him.

*Mira.*



*Mira.* You seem to be unattended, Madam,—You us'd to have the *beau monde* throng after you ; and a flock of gay fine perukes hovering round you.

*Wit.* Like moths about a candle—I had like to have lost my comparison for want of breath.

*Milla.* O I have deny'd myself airs to-day. I have walk'd as fast through the crowd—

*Wit.* As a favourite just disgraced ; and with as few followers.

*Milla.* Dear Mr. Witwoud, truce with your similitudes : for I am as sick of 'em—

*Wit.* As a physician of a good air—I cannot help it, Madam, tho' 'tis against myself.

*Milla.* Yet, again ; Mincing, stand between me and his wit.

*Wit.* Do, Mrs. Mincing, like a skreen before a great fire. I confess I do blaze to-day, I am too bright.

*Mrs. Fain.* But, dear Millamant, why were you so long ?

*Milla.* Long ! Lord, have I not made violent haste ? I have ask'd ev'ry living thing I met for you ; I have enquir'd after you, as after a new fashion.

*Wit.* Madam, truce with your similitudes—No, you met her husband, and did not ask him for her.

*Mira.* By your leave, Witwoud, that were like enquiring after an old fashion, to ask a husband for his wife.

*Wit.* Hum, a hit, a hit, a palpable hit, I confess it.

*Mrs. Fain.* You were dressed before I came abroad.

*Milla.* Ay, that's true—O but then I had—Mincing, what had I ? Why was I so long ?

*Minc.* O, Mem, your Laship staid to peruse a packet of letters.

*Milla.* O ay, letters—I had letters—I am persecuted with letters—I hate letters—Nobody knows how to write letters ; and yet one has 'em one does not know why—They serve one to pin up one's hair.

*Wit.* Is that the way ? Pray, Madam, do you pin up your hair with all your letters ? I find I must keep copies.

*Milla.* Only with those in verse, Mr. Witwoud. I never pin up my hair with prose. I think I try'd once, Mincing.

*Minc.*

*Minc.* O, Mem, I shall never forget it.

*Milla.* Ay, poor Mincing tift and tift all the morning.

*Minc.* 'Till I had the cramp in my fingers, I'll vow, Mem, and all to no purpose. But when your Laship pins it up with poetry, it sits so pleasant the next day as anything, and is so pure and so crips.

*Wit.* Indeed! so crips?

*Minc.* You're such a critic, Mr. Witwoud.

*Milla.* Mirabell, did you take exceptions last night? O ay, and went away—Now I think on't, I'm angry?—No, now I think on't I am pleas'd—For I believe I gave you some pain.

*Mira.* Does that please you?

*Milla.* Infinitely; I love to give pain.

*Mira.* You would affect a cruelty which is not in your nature; your true vanity is in the power of pleasing.

*Milla.* O, I ask your pardon for that—One's cruelty is one's power, and when one parts with one's cruelty one parts with one's power: and when one has parted with that, I fancy one's old and ugly.

*Mira.* Ay, ay; suffer your cruelty to ruin the object of your power, to destroy your lover—And then how vain, how lost a thing you'll be? Nay, 'tis true: you are no longer handsome when you have lost your lover; your beauty dies upon the instant: for beauty is the lover's gift; 'tis he bestows your charms—Your glass is all a cheat. The ugly and the old, whom the looking-glass mortifies, yet after commendation can be flattered by it, and discover beauties in it: for that reflects our praises, rather than your face.

*Milla.* O the vanity of these men! Fainall, d'ye hear him? If they did not commend us, we were not handsome! Now you must know they could not commend one, if one was not handsome. Beauty the lover's gift,—Lord, what is a lover that it can give? Why one makes lovers as fast as one pleases, and they live as long as one pleases, and they die as soon as one pleases: and then, if one pleases, one makes more.

*Wit.* Very pretty. Why you make no more of making of lovers, Madam, than of making so many card-matches.

*Milla.*

*Milla.* One no more owes one's beauty to a lover, than one's wit to an echo: they can but reflect what we look and say; vain empty things, if we are silent or unseen, and want a being.

*Mira.* Yet, to those two vain empty things, you owe too the greatest pleasures of your life.

*Milla.* How so?

*Mira.* To your lover you owe the pleasure of hearing yourselves prais'd; and to an echo the pleasure of hearing yourselves talk.

*Wit.* But I know a lady that loves talking so incessantly, she won't give an echo fair play; she has that everlasting rotation of tongue, that an echo must wait 'till she dies, before it can catch her last words.

*Milla.* O fiction; Fainall, let us leave these men.

*Mira.* Draw off Witwoud. [*Aside to Mrs. Fainall.*]

*Mrs. Fain.* Immediately; I have a word or two for Mr. Witwoud. [*Exeunt Mrs. Fain. and Witwoud.*]

*Mira.* I would beg a little private audience too—— You had the tyranny to deny me last night; though you knew I came to impart a secret to you that concern'd my love.

*Milla.* You saw I was engag'd.

*Mira.* Unkind. You had the leisure to entertain a herd of fools: things who visit you from their excessive idleness; bestowing on your easiness that time, which is the incumbrance of their lives. How can you find delight in such society? It is impossible they should admire you, they are not capable: or if they were, it shou'd be to you as a mortification; for sure to please a fool is some degree of folly.

*Milla.* I please myself—— Besides, sometimes to converse with fools is for my health.

*Mira.* Your health! Is there a worse disease than the conversation of fools?

*Milla.* Yes, the vapours; fools are physic for it, next to *assa fœtida*.

*Mira.* You are in a course of fools.

*Milla.* Mirabell, if you persist in this offensive freedom—— you'll displease me—— I think I must resolve, after all, not to have you—— We shan't agree.

*Mira.* Not in our physic it may be.

*Milla.*

*Milla.* And yet our distemper in all likelihood will be the same; for we shall be sick of one another. I shan't endure to be reprimanded, nor instructed, 'tis so dull to act always by advice, and so tedious to be told of one's faults—I can't bear it. Well, I won't have you Mirabell—I'm resolv'd—I think—You may go—Ha, ha, ha! What would you give that you could help loving me?

*Mira.* I would give something that you did not know I could not help it.

*Milla.* Come, don't look grave then. Well, what do you say to me?

*Mira.* I say that a man may as soon make a friend by his wit, or a fortune by his honesty, as win a woman with plain-dealing and sincerity.

*Milla.* Sententious Mirabell! Prithee don't look with that violent and inflexible wise face, like Solomon at the dividing of the child in an old tapestry hanging.

*Mira.* You are merry, Madam; but I would persuade you for a moment to be serious.

*Milla.* What, with that face? No, if you keep your countenance, 'tis impossible I should hold mine. Well, after all, there is something very moving in a love-sick face. Ha, ha, ha—Well I won't laugh, don't be peevish, —Heigho! Now I'll be melancholy, as melancholy as a watch-light. Well, Mirabell, if ever you will win me, woo me now—Nay, if you are so tedious, fare you well? I see they are walking away.

*Mira.* Can you find, in the variety of your disposition, one moment——

*Milla.* To hear you tell me Foible's married, and your plot like to speed—No.

*Mira.* But how you come to know it——

*Milla.* Without the help of the devil, you can't imagine, unless she should tell me herself. Which of the two it may have been, I will leave you to consider; and when you have done thinking of that, think of me.

[Exit.

*Mira.* I have something more—Gone—Think of you! To think of a whirlwind, though 'twere in a whirlwind, were a case of more steady contemplation; ' a very ' tranquility of mind and mansion. A fellow that lives in ' a wind-mill,

‘ a windmill, has not a more whimsical dwelling than the  
 ‘ heart of a man that is lodged in a woman. There is no  
 ‘ point of the compass to which they cannot turn, and by  
 ‘ which they are not turn’d; and by one as well as ano-  
 ‘ ther; for motion, not method, is their occupation. To  
 ‘ know this, and yet continue to be in love, is to be made  
 ‘ wise from the dictates of reason, and yet persevere to play  
 ‘ the fool by the force of instinct’—Oh, here come my pair  
 of turtles.—What, billing so sweetly! Is not Valentine’s  
 day over with you yet?

*Enter Waitwell and Foible.*

*Mira.* Sirrah, Waitwell, why sure you think you were marry’d for your own recreation, and not for my conveniency.

*Wait.* Your pardon, Sir. With submission, we have indeed been solacing in lawful delights; but still with an eye to business, Sir; I have instructed her as well as I could. If she can take your directions as readily as my instructions, Sir, your affairs are in a prosperous way.

*Mira.* Give you joy, Mrs. Foible.

*Foib.* O-la, Sir, I’m so agham’d—I’m afraid my lady has been in a thousand inquietudes for me. But I protest, Sir, I made as much haste as I could.

*Wait.* That she did, indeed, Sir. It was my fault that she did not make more.

*Mira.* That I believe.

*Foib.* But I told my lady, as you instructed me, Sir, that I had a prospect of seeing Sir Rowland your uncle; and that I would put her ladyship’s picture in my pocket to shew him; which I’ll be sure to say has made him so enamour’d with her beauty, that he burns with impatience to lie at her ladyship’s feet, and worship the original.

*Mira.* Excellent Foible! Matrimony has made you eloquent in love.

*Wait.* I think she has profited, Sir, I think so.

*Foib.* You have seen Madam Millamant, Sir?

*Mira.* Yes.

*Foib.* I told her, Sir, because I did not know that you might find an opportunity; she had so much company last night.

D

*Mira.*

*Mira.* Your diligence will merit more——in the mean time—— [Gives money.

*Foib.* O dear Sir, your humble servant.

*Wait.* Spouse.

*Mira.* Sand off, Sir, not a penny——Go on and prosper, Foible——The lease shall be made good, and the farm stock'd, if we succeed.

*Foib.* I don't question your generosity, Sir; and you need not doubt of success. If you have no more commands, Sir, I'll be gone; I'm sure my lady is at her toilet, and can't dress 'till I come——O dear, I'm sure that [looking out.] was Mrs. Marwood, that went by in a mask, if she has seen me with you I'm sure she'll tell my lady. I'll make haste home and prevent her. Your servant, Sir. B'w'y Waitwell. [Exit.

*Wait.* Sir Rowland, if you please. The jade's so pert upon her preferment she forgets herself.

*Mira.* Come, Sir, will you endeavour to forget yourself——and transform into Sir Rowland.

*Wait.* Why, Sir, it will be impossible I should remember myself——Marry'd, knighted, and attended, all in one day! 'Tis enough to make a man forget himself. • The difficulty will be how to recover my acquaintance • and familiarity with my former self; and fall from my • transformation to a reformation into Waitwell. Nay, • I shan't be quite the same Waitwell neither,' and now I remember, I'm marry'd, and can't be my own man again.

Ay, there's my grief; that's the sad change of life;  
To lose my title, and yet keep my wife.

END of the SECOND ACT.

### ACT III.

SCENE, *A room in Lady Wishfort's house.*

*Lady Wishfort at her toilet, Peg waiting.*

LADY WISHFORT.

**M**erciful! no news of Foible yet?

*Peg.* No, Madam.

*Lady W.* I have no more patience——If I have not fretted

ted myself till I am pale again, there's no veracity in me. Fetch me the red—the red, do you hear, sweetheart? An errant ash-colour, as I'm a person. Look you how this wench stirs! Why dost thou not fetch me a little red? Didst thou not hear me, Mopus?

*Peg.* The red ratafia does your ladyship mean, or the cherry-brandy?

*Lady W.* Ratafia, fool! no, fool, not the ratafia, fool. Grant me patience! I mean the Spanish paper, idiot, complexion. Darling paint, paint, paint; dost thou understand that, changeling, dangling thy hands, like bobbins, before thee? Why dost thou not stir, puppet? thou wooden thing upon wires!

*Peg.* Lord, Madam, your ladyship is so impatient!—I cannot come at the paint, Madam; Mrs. Foible has locked it up, and carried the key with her.

*Lady W.* A pox take you both! Fetch me the cherry-brandy, then.

[*Exit Peg.*]

I'm as pale and as faint—I look like Mrs. Qualmsick, the curate's wife, that's always breeding. Wench, come, come, wench; what art thou doing; Sipping, tasting? Save thee, dost thou not know the bottle?

*Re-enter Peg, with a bottle and China cup.*

*Peg.* Madam, I staid to bring your ladyship a cup.

*Lady W.* A cup, save thee! and what a cup hast thou brought? Dost thou take me for a fairy, to drink out of an acorn? Why didst thou not bring thy thimble? Hast thou ne'er a brass thimble clinking in thy pocket, with a bit of nutmeg? I warrant thee. Come, fill, fill—So—again. See who that is. [*One knocks.*] Set down the bottle first. Here, here, under the table—What, wouldst thou go with the bottle in thy hand, like a tapster? As I'm a person, this wench has lived in an inn upon the road, before she came to me, 'like Maritornes, 'the Asturian, in Don Quixote.' No Foible yet?

*Peg.* No, Madam, Mrs. Marwood.

*Lady W.* Oh, Marwood! let her come in. Come in, good Marwood.

*Enter Mrs. Marwood.*

*Mrs. Mar.* I'm surprized to find your ladyship in dishabille at this time of day.

*Lady W.* Foible's a lost thing; has been abroad since morning and never heard of since.

*Mrs. Mar.* I saw her but now, as I came mask'd through the Park, in conference with Mirabell.

*Lady W.* With Mirabell! You call my blood into my face, with mentioning that traitor. She durst not have the confidence. I sent her to negotiate an affair, in which, if I'm detected, I'm undone. If that wheedling villain has wrought upon Foible to detect me, I'm ruin'd. Oh, my friend, I'm a wretch of wretches, if I'm detected!

*Mrs. Mar.* Oh, Madam, you cannot suspect Mrs. Foible's integrity.

*Lady W.* Oh, he carries poison in his tongue, that would corrupt integrity itself! If she has given him an opportunity, she has as good as put her integrity into his hands. Ah, dear Marwood! what's integrity to an opportunity?—Hark! I hear her. Dear friend, retire into my closet, that I may examine her with more freedom. You'll pardon me, dear friend, I can make bold with you. There are books over the chimney; Quarles and Pryn, and the Short View of the Stage, with Bunyan's Works, to entertain you.—Go, you thing, and send her in. [*To Peg.*

*Enter Foible.*

*Lady W.* Oh, Foible! where hast thou been? What hast thou been doing?

*Foib.* Madam, I have seen the party.

*Lady W.* But what hast thou done?

*Foib.* Nay, 'tis your ladyship has done, and are to do; I have only promised. But a man so enamoured—so transported! Well, if worshipping of pictures be a sin—Poor Sir Rowland, I say.

*Lady W.* The miniature has been counted like. But hast thou not betrayed me, Foible? Hast thou not detected me to that faithless Mirabell? What hadst thou to do with him in the Park? Answer me, has he got nthing out of thee?

*Foib.* So, the devil has been beforehand with me. What shall I say?—Alas, Madam, could I help it, if I met that confident thing? Was I in fault? If you had heard how he used me, and all upon your ladyship's account, I am sure you would not suspect my fidelity. Nay, if that had been the worst, I could have borne; but he had a sting at your ladyship too; and then I could not hold; but, i'faith, I gave him his own.

*Lady W.*



*Lady W.* Me! What did the filthy fellow say?

*Foib.* Oh, Madam, 'tis a shame to say what he said!—With his taunts, and his sneers, tossing up his nose—Humph, (says he) what, are you hatching some plot, (says he) you are so early abroad? Or catering (says he) ferreting for some disbanded officer, I warrant. Half-pay is but thin subsistence (says he)—Well, what pension does your lady propose?—Let me see (says he)—what, she must come down pretty deep, now; she's superannuated, (says he) and——

*Lady W.* Ods my life! I'll have him—I'll have him murdered, I'll have him poisoned. Where does he eat? I'll marry a drawer, to have him poisoned in his wine. I'll send for Robin from Locket's immediately.

*Foib.* Poison him! poisoning's too good for him. Starve him, Madam, starve him; marry Sir Rowland, and get him disinherited. Oh, you would bless yourself to hear what he said!

*Lady W.* A villain! Superannuated!

*Foib.* Humph, (says he) I hear you are laying designs against me too, (says he) and Mrs. Millamant is to marry my uncle; (he does not suspect a word of your ladyship) but (says he) I'll fit you for that, I warrant you (says he). I'll hamper you for that, (says he) and you and your old frippery too (says he). I'll handle you——

*Lady W.* Audacious villain! handle me! Would he durst—Frippery! old frippery! Was there ever such a foul-mouth'd fellow? I'll be marry'd to-morrow; I'll be contracted to-night.

*Foib.* The sooner the better, Madam.

*Lady W.* Will Sir Rowland be here, say'st thou? When, Foible?

*Foib.* Incontinently, Madam. No new sheriff's wife expects the return of her husband, after knighthood, with that impatience with which Sir Rowland burns for the dear hour of kissing your ladyship's hand after dinner.

*Lady W.* Frippery! superannuated frippery! I'll frippery the villain; I'll reduce him to frippery and rags; a tatterdemalion. Yes, he shall have my niece, with her fortune, he shall.

*Foib.* He! I hope to see him lodge in Ludgate first,  
D 3 and

and angle into Black Friars for brass farthings, with an old mitten.

*Lady W.* Ay, dear Foible; thank thee for that, dear Foible. He has put me out of all patience. I shall never recompose my features to receive Sir Rowland with any œconomy of face. This wretch has fretted me, that I am absolutely decayed. Look, Foible.

*Foib.* Your ladyship has frowned a little too rashly, indeed, Madam. There are some cracks discernible in the white varnish.

*Lady W.* Let me see the glass—Cracks, say’st thou? Why, I am errantly flead. I look like an old peel’d wall. Thou must repair me, Foible, before Sir Rowland comes, or I shall never keep up to my picture.

*Foib.* I warrant you, Madam: a little art once made your picture like you; and now, a little of the same art must make you like your picture. Your picture must fit for you, Madam.

*Lady W.* But art thou sure Sir Rowland will not fail to come? Or will he not fail when he does come; Will he be importunate, Foible, ‘and push?’ For if he should not be importunate, I shall never break decorums. I shall die with confusion, if I am forced to make advances. ‘Oh, no, I can never advance. I shall swoon, if he should expect advances.’ No, I hope Sir Rowland is better bred, than to put a lady to the necessity of breaking her forms. I won’t be too coy, neither; I won’t give him despair. But a little disdain is not amiss; a little scorn is alluring.

*Foib.* A little scorn becomes your ladyship.

*Lady W.* Yes, but tenderness becomes me best—A sort of a dyingness. You see that picture has a sort of a——Ha, Foible! a swimmingness in the eyes——Yes, I’ll look so——My niece affects it; but she wants features. Is Sir Rowland handsome? Let my toilet be removed; I’ll dress above. I’ll receive Sir Rowland here. Is he handsome? Don’t answer me; I won’t know; I’ll be surpris’d; be taken by surpris’e.

*Foib.* By storm, Madam. Sir Rowland’s a brisk man.

*Lady W.* Is he? Oh, then, he’ll importune, if he’s a brisk man. I shall save decorums, if Sir Rowland importunes. I have a mortal terror at the apprehension of  
offending

offending against decorums. Oh, I'm glad he's a brisk man! Let my things be removed, good Foible. [*Exit.*

*Enter Mrs. Fainall.*

*Mrs. Fain.* Oh, Foible! I have been in a fright, lest I should come too late. That devil, Marwood, saw you in the Park with Mirabell, and, I'm afraid, will discover it to my Lady.

*Foib.* Discover what, Madam?

*Mrs. Fain.* Nay, nay, put not on that strange face. I am privy to the whole design, and know that Waitwell, to whom thou wert this morning married, is to personate Mirabell's uncle, and, as such, winning my Lady, to involve her in those difficulties from which Mirabell only must release her, by his making his conditions to have my cousin and her fortune left to her own disposal.

*Foib.* Oh, dear Madam, I beg your pardon! It was not my confidence in your ladyship that was deficient; but I thought the former good correspondence between your ladyship and Mr. Mirabell, might have hindered his communicating this secret.

*Mrs. Fain.* Dear Foible, forget that.

*Foib.* Oh, dear Madam, Mr. Mirabell is such a sweet, winning gentleman! But your ladyship is the pattern of generosity. Sweet lady, to be so good! Mr. Mirabell cannot choose but be grateful. I find your ladyship has his heart still. Now, Madam, I can safely tell your ladyship our success. Mrs. Marwood has told my Lady; but I warrant I managed myself. I turned it all for the better. I told my Lady, that Mr. Mirabell railed at her; I laid horrid things to his charge, I'll vow; and my Lady is so incensed, that she'll be contracted to Sir Rowland to-night, she says. I warrant I worked her up, that he may have her for asking for, 'as they say of a Welch 'maidenhead.'

*Mrs. Fain.* Oh, rare Foible!

*Foib.* Madam, I beg your ladyship to acquaint Mr. Mirabell of his success. I would be seen as little as possible to speak to him; besides, I believe Madam Marwood watches me. She has a month's mind; but I know Mr. Mirabell can't abide her—[*Calls.*]—John, remove my Lady's toilet. Madam, your servant. My Lady is so impatient, I fear she'll come for me, if I stay.

*Mrs.*

*Mrs. Fain.* I'll go with you up the back stairs, lest I should meet her. [Exeunt.]

*Enter Mrs. Marwood.*

*Mrs. Mar.* Indeed, *Mrs. Engine!* is it thus with you? Are you become a go-between of this importance? Yes, I shall watch you. 'Why, this wench is the *pass-par-tout*, a very master-key to every body's strong box.' My friend, *Fainall*, have you carried it so swimmingly? 'I thought there was something in it: but it seems it's over with you. Your loathing is not from a want of appetite, then, but from a surfeit; else you could never be so cool to fall from a principal to be an assistant; to procure for him! a pattern of generosity that, I confess. Well, *Mr. Fainall*, you have met with your match. Oh, man, man! woman, woman! The devil's an ass. If I were a painter I would draw him like an idiot, a driveler, with bib and bells. Man should have his head and horns, and woman the rest of him. Poor simple fiend!'—*Madam Marwood* has a month's mind; but he can't abide her. 'Twere better for him you had not been his confessor in that affair, without you could have kept his counsel closer. 'I shall not prove another pattern of generosity. He has not obliged me with those excesses of himself; and now I'll have none of him. Here comes the good lady, panting ripe; with a heart full of hope, and a head full of care, like any chymist upon the day of projection.

*Enter Lady Wishfort.*

*Lady W.* Oh, dear *Marwood!* what shall I say for this rude forgetfulness? But my dear friend is all goodness.

*Mrs. Mar.* No apologies, dear *Madam!* I have been very well entertained.

*Lady W.* As I'm a person, I am in a very chaos, to think I should so forget myself; but I have such an olio of affairs, really I know not what to do——[Calls.]——*Foible!*——I expect my nephew, *Sir Wilfull*, every moment, too——*Why, Foible!*——He means to travel for improvement.

*Mrs. Mar.* Methinks *Sir Wilfull* should rather think of marrying than travelling, at his years. I hear he is turned of forty.

*Lady.*

‘ *Lady W.* Oh, he’s in less danger of being spoiled by his travels. I am against my nephew’s marrying too young. It will be time enough when he comes back, and has acquired discretion to choose for himself.

‘ *Mrs. Mar.* Methinks Mrs. Millamant and he would make a very fit match. He may travel afterwards. ‘Tis a thing very usual with young gentlemen.

‘ *Lady W.* I promise you, I have thought on’t; and since ’tis your judgment, I’ll think on’t again. I assure you, I will; I value your judgment extremely. On my word, I’ll propose it.

‘ *Enter Foible.*

‘ Come, come, Foible—I had forgot my nephew will be here before dinner—I must make haste.

‘ *Foib.* Mr. Witwoud and Mr. Petulant are come to dine with your ladyship.

‘ *Lady W.* Oh, dear! I can’t appear till I’m dress’d. Dear Marwood, shall I be free with you again, and beg you to entertain them? I’ll make all imaginable haste. Dear friend, excuse me. [*Ex. Foible and Lady W.*]

‘ *Enter Mrs. Millamant and Mincing.*

*Milla.* Sure never any thing was so unbred as that odious man——Marwood, your servant.

*Mrs. Mar.* You have a colour; what’s the matter?

*Milla.* That horrid fellow, Petulant, has provoked me into a flame——I have broke my fan——Mincing, lend me yours. Is not all the powder out of my hair?

*Mrs. Mar.* No. What has he done?

*Milla.* Nay, he has done nothing; he has only talked——Nay, he has said nothing, neither; but he has contradicted every thing that has been said. For my part, I thought Witwoud and he would have quarrelled.

*Minc.* I vow, Mem, I thought once they would have fit.

*Milla.* Well, ’tis a lamentable thing, I swear, that one has not the liberty of choosing one’s acquaintance, as one does one’s cloaths.

‘ *Mrs. Mar.* If we had that liberty, we should be as weary of one set of acquaintance, tho’ never so good, as we are of one suit, tho’ never so fine: a fool and a doily stuff would now and then find days of grace, and be worn for variety.

‘ *Milla.* I could consent to wear them, if they would wear

‘ wear alike ; but fools never wear out—They are such  
‘ *drap-de-berry* things ! Without one could give them to  
‘ one’s chambermaid, after a day or two.’

*Mrs. Mar.* ‘ ’Twere better so indeed. Or what think  
‘ you of the play-house ? A fine, gay, glossy fool should  
‘ be given there, like a new masking habit after the mas-  
‘ querade is over, and we have done with the disguise ;  
‘ for a fool’s visit is always a disguise, and never admitted  
‘ by a woman of wit, but to blind her affair with a lover  
‘ of sense.’ If you would but appear barefaced now, and  
own Mirabell, you might as easily put off Petulant and  
Witwoud, as your hood and scarf. And indeed ’tis time ;  
for the town has found it : ‘ the secret is grown too big  
‘ for the pretence : ’tis like Mrs. Primley’s great belly ;  
‘ she may lace it down before, but it burnishes on her  
‘ hips. Indeed, Millamant, you can no more conceal it,  
‘ than my Lady Strammel can her face, that goodly face,  
‘ which, in defiance to her Rhenish-wine tea, will not be  
‘ comprehended in a mask.’

*Milla.* I’ll take my death, Marwood, you are more  
censorious than a decayed beauty, or a discarded toast—  
Mincing, tell the men they may come up. My aunt is  
not dressing here. Their folly is less provoking than your  
malice.

[*Exit Minc.*]

The town has found it ! What has found it ? That Mira-  
bell loves me is no more a secret, than it is a secret that  
you discovered it to my aunt, or than the reason why you  
discovered it is a secret.

*Mrs. Mar.* You are nettled.

*Milla.* You are mistaken. Ridiculous !

*Mrs. Mar.* Indeed, my dear, you’ll tear another fan,  
if you don’t mitigate those violent airs.

*Milla.* Oh, silly ! Ha, ha, ha ! I could laugh immo-  
derally. Poor Mirabell ! his constancy to me has quite  
destroyed his complaisance for all the world beside. I  
swear, I never enjoin’d it him to be so coy. If I had the  
vanity to think he would obey me, I would command him  
to shew more gallantry. ’Tis hardly well bred, to be so  
particular on one hand, and so insensible on the other.  
But I despair to prevail ; so let him follow his own way.  
Ha, ha, ha ! Pardon me, dear creature, I must laugh ;  
ha,

ha, ha, ha! tho', I grant you, 'tis a little barbarous, ha, ha, ha!

' *Mrs. Mar.* What pity 'tis, so much raillery, and delivered with so significant gesture, should be so unhappily directed to miscarry!

' *Milla.* Ha! dear creature, I ask your pardon; I swear, I did not mind you.'

*Mrs. Mar.* Mr. Mirabell and you both may think it a thing impossible, when I shall tell him by telling you——

*Milla.* Oh, dear! what? For it is the same thing if I hear it. Ha, ha, ha!

*Mrs. Mar.* That I detest him, hate him, Madam.

*Milla.* Oh, Madam! why, so do I. And yet the creature loves me, ha, ha, ha! How can one forbear laughing to think of it? I am a Sybil, if I am not amazed to think what he can see in me. I'll take my death, I think you are handsomer, and within a year or two as young. If you could but stay for me, I should overtake you—But that cannot be—Well, that thought makes me melancholic—Now I'll be sad.

*Mrs. Mar.* Your merry note may be changed sooner than you think.

*Milla.* D'ye say so? 'Then I'm resolved I'll have a song, to keep up my spirits.'—*But here come the gentlemen.*

*Enter Mincing.*

' *Minc.* The gentlemen stay but to comb, Madam; and will wait on you.

' *Milla.* Desire Mrs. ——, that is in the next room, to sing the song I would have learnt yesterday——You shall hear it, Madam—Not that there's any great matter in it; but 'tis agreeable to my humour.

### ' S O N G.

' Love's but the frailty of the mind,  
' When 'tis not with ambition join'd;  
' A sickly flame, which, if not fed, expires;  
' And feeding, wastes in self-consuming fires.

' 'Tis not to wound a wanton boy  
' Or am'rous youth, that gives the joy;  
' But 'tis the glory to have pierc'd a swain,  
' For whom inferior beauties sigh'd in vain.

' Then

- ' Then I alone the conquest prize,
- ' When I insult a rival's eyes :
- ' If there's delight in love, 'tis when I see
- ' That heart which others bleed for, bleed for me.

*Enter Petulant and Witwoud.*

*Milla.* Is your animosity compos'd, gentlemen?

*Wit.* Raillery, raillery, Madam; we have no animosity—We hit off a little wit now and then, but no animosity—The falling out of wits is like the falling out of lovers——We agree in the main, like treble and base. Ha, Petulant?

*Pet.* Ay, in the main——But when I have a humour to contradict——

*Wit.* Ay, when he has a humour to contradict, then I contradict too. What, I know my cue. Then we contradict one another like two battle-dores: for contradictions beget one another like Jews.

*Pet.* If he says black's black—if I have a humour to say 'tis blue——Let that pass——All's one for that. If I have a humour to prove it, it must be granted.

*Wit.* Not positively must——But it may——may.

*Pet.* Yes, it positively must, upon proof positive.

*Wit.* Ay, upon proof positive it must; but upon proof presumptive it only may. That's a logical distinction now, Madam.

*Mrs. Mar.* I perceive your debates are of importance, and very learnedly handled.

*Pet.* Importance is one thing, and learning's another; but a debate's a debate, that I assert.

*Wit.* Petulant's an enemy to learning; he relies altogether on his parts.

*Pet.* No, I'm no enemy to learning; it hurts not me.

*Mrs. Mar.* That's a sign indeed 'tis no enemy to you.

*Pet.* No, no; 'tis no enemy to any body, but them that have it.

*Milla.* Well, an illiterate man's my aversion: I wonder at the impudence of any illiterate man, to offer to make love.

*Wit.* That I confess I wonder at too.

*Milla.* Ah! to marry an ignorant! that can hardly read or write.

*Pet.*



*Pet.* Why should a man be any farther from being married, tho' he can't read, than he is from being hang'd. The ordinary's paid for setting the psalm, and the parish-priest for reading the ceremony. And for the rest which is to follow in both cases, a man may do it without book——So all's one for that.

*Milla.* D'ye hear the creature? Lord, here's company, I'll be gone. [Exit.

*Enter Sir Wilfull Witwoud, in a riding-dress, and a Footman.*

*Wit.* In the name of Bartholomew and his fair, what have we here?

*Mrs. Mar.* 'Tis your brother, I fancy. Don't you know him?

*Wit.* Not I——Yes, I think it is he——I've almost forgot him; I have not seen him since the coronation.

*Foot.* Sir, my lady's dressing. Here's company; if you please to walk in, in the mean time.

*Sir Wil.* Dressing! What, 'tis but morning here, I warrant, with you in London: we shou'd count it towards afternoon in our parts, down in Shropshire——Why then belike my aunt han't din'd yet——Ha, friend!

*Foot.* Your aunt, Sir?

*Sir Wil.* My aunt, Sir! yes, my aunt, Sir, and your lady, Sir; your lady is my aunt, Sir——Why, what dost thou not know me, friend? Why then send some body hither that does. How long hast thou lived with thy lady, fellow, ha?

*Foot.* A week, Sir; longer than any body in the house, except my lady's woman.

*Sir Wil.* Why then belike thou dost not know thy lady, if thou seest her, ha, friend?

*Foot.* Why truly, Sir, I cannot safely swear to her face in the morning, before she is dress'd; 'Tis like I may give a shrewd gueses at her by this time.

*Sir Wil.* Well, pr'ythee try what thou canst do, if thou canst not gueses, enquire her out, dost hear, fellow? And tell her, her nephew, Sir Wilfull Witwoud, is in the house.

*Foot.* I shall, Sir.

*Sir Wil.* Hold ye, hear me, friend; a word with you in your ear; pr'ythee who are these gallaants?

*Foot.* Really, Sir, I can't tell; here come so many here, 'tis hard to know 'em all. [Exit.]

*Sir Wil.* Oens this fellow knows less than a starling; I don't think a'knows his own name.

*Mrs. Mar.* Mr. Witwoud, your brother is not behind-hand in forgetfulness—I fancy he has forgot you too.

*Wit.* I hope so——The devil take him that remembers first, I say.

*Sir Wil.* Save you, gentlemen and lady.

*Mrs. Mar.* For shame, Mr. Witwoud: why won't you speak to him?——And you, Sir.

*Wit.* Petulant, speak.

*Pet.* And you, Sir.

*Sir Wil.* No offence, I hope. [Salutes Marwood.]

*Mrs. Mar.* No sure, Sir.

*Wit.* This is a vile dog, I see that already. No offence! Ha, ha, ha! to him; to him, Petulant; smoke, him.

*Pet.* It seems as if you had come a journey, Sir; hem, hem. [Surveying him round.]

*Sir Wil.* Very likely, Sir, that it may seem so.

*Pet.* No offence, I hope, Sir.

*Wit.* Smoke the boots, the boots: Petulant, the boots; ha, ha, ha!

*Sir Wil.* May be not, Sir; thereafter as 'tis meant, Sir.

*Pet.* Sir, I presume upon the information of your boots.

*Sir Wil.* Why, 'tis like you may, Sir: if you are not satisfy'd with the information of my boots, Sir, if you will step to the stable, you may enquire further of my horse, Sir.

*Pet.* Your horse, Sir! Your horse is an ass, Sir?

*Sir Wil.* Do you speak by way of offence, Sir?

*Mrs. Mar.* The gentleman's merry, that's all, Sir—S'life we shall have a quarrel betwixt an horse and an ass, before they find one another out. [Aside.] You must not take any thing amiss from your friends, Sir. You are among your friends here, though it may be you don't know it—If I am not mistaken, you are Sir Wiltull Witwoud.

*Sir Wil.* Right, Lady; I am Sir Wiltull Witwoud; fo

so I write myself; no offence to any body, I hope; and nephew to the lady Wishfort of this mansion.

*Mrs. Mar.* Don't you know this gentleman, Sir?

*Sir Wil.* Hum! What, sure 'tis not——Yea, by'r lady, but 'tis——'Sheart I know not whether 'tis or no——Yea, but 'tis, by the Wrekin. Brother Antony! what Tony, i'faith! What dost thou not know me? By'r lady nor I thee, thou art so becravatted, and so beperiwig'd——'Sheart why dost not speak? Art thou overjoy'd?

*Wit.* Odsfo, brother, is it you? Your servant, brother.

*Sir Wil.* Your servant! Why yours, Sir. Your servant again——'Sheart, and your friend and servant to that——And a—— [*pugh*] and flap dragon for your service, Sir: and a hare's foot, and a hare's scut for your service, Sir? an you be so cold and so courtly!

*Wit.* No offence, I hope, brother.

*Sir Wil.* 'Sheart, Sir, but there is, and much offence——A pox! is this your inns o'court-breeding, not to know your friends and your relations, your elders, and your betters?

*Wit.* Why, brother Wilfull of Salop, you may be as short as a Shrewsbury cake, if you please. But I tell you 'tis not modish to know relations in town. You think you're in the country, where great lubberly brothers flabber and kifs one another when they meet, like a call of serjeants——'Tis not the fashion here; 'tis not indeed, dear brother.

*Sir Wil.* The fashion's a fool, and you're a fop, dear brother. 'Sheart, I've suspected this——By't lady I conjectur'd you were a fop, since you began to change the stile of your letters, and write in a scrap of paper gilt round the edges, no bigger than a Subpœna. I might expect this when you left off, Honoured brother; and hoping you are in good health, and so forth——To begin with a, Rat me, knight, I'm so sick of last night's debauch,——Ods heart, and then tell a familiar tale of a cock and a bull, and a whore and a bottle, and so conclude——You could write news before you were out of your time, when you liv'd with honest Purple-nose the attorney of Furnival's Inn——You cou'd intreat to be remember'd then to your friends round the Wrekin. We could have

Gazettes then, and Dawk's letter, and the weekly bill, 'till of late days.

*Pet.* 'Slife, Witwoud, were you ever an attorney's clerk? Of the family of the Furnivals. Ha, ha, ha!

*Wit.* Ay, ay, but that was but for a while. Not long, not long. Pshaw, I was not in my own power then. An orphan, and this fellow was my guardian. Ay, ay, I was glad to consent to that, man, to come to London. He had the disposal of me then. If I had not agreed to that, I might have been bound 'prentice to a felt-maker in Shrewsbury; this fellow would have bound me to a maker of felts.

*Sir Wil.* 'Sheart, and better than to be bound to a maker of fops; where, I suppose, you have serv'd your time; and now you may set up for yourself.

*Mrs. Mar.* You intend to travel, Sir, as I'm inform'd.

*Sir Wil.* Belike I may, Madam. I may chance to sail upon the salt seas, if my mind hold.

*Pet.* And the wind serve.

*Sir Wil.* Serve or not serve, I shan't ask licence of you, Sir; nor the weather-cock your companion. I direct my discourse to the lady, Sir; 'tis like my aunt may have told you, Madam——Yes, I have settled my concerns, I may say now, and am minded to see foreign parts. If an how the peace holds, whereby that is taxes abate.

*Mrs. Mar.* I thought you had designed for France at all adventures.

*Sir Wil.* I can't tell that; 'tis like I may, and 'tis like I may not. I am somewhat dainty in making a resolution—because when I make it I keep it. I don't stand, shall I shall I, then; if I say't, I'll do't: but I have thoughts to tarry a small matter in town, to learn somewhat of your Lingo first, before I cross the seas. I'd gladly have spice of your French, as they say, whereby to hold discourse in foreign countries.

*Mrs. Mar.* Here's an academy in town for that use.

*Sir Wil.* Is there? 'Tis like there may.

*Mrs. Mar.* No doubt you will return very much improv'd.

*Wit.* Yes, refin'd like a Dutch skipper from a whale-fishing.

*Enter*

*Enter* 'Lady Wishfort *and*' Fainall.

' *Lady W.* Nephew, you are welcome.

' *Sir Wil.* Aunt, your servant.

' *Fain.* Sir Wilfull, your most faithful servant.

' *Sir Wil.* Cousin Fainall, give me your hand.

' *Lady W.* Cousin Witwoud, your servant; Mr. Petulant, your servant—Nephew, you are welcome again. Will you drink any thing after your journey, nephew, before you eat? Dinner's almost ready.

' *Sir Wil.* I'm very well, I thank you, aunt—However, I thank you for your courteous offer. 'Sheart I was afraid you wou'd have been in the fashion too, and have remember'd to have forgot your relations. ' Here's your cousin Tony, belike, I mayn't call him brother for fear of offence.

' *Lady W.* O he's a railer, nephew—My cousin's à wit: and your great wits always rally their best friends to choose. When you have been abroad, nephew, you'll understand raillery better.

' [*Fain. and Mrs. Marwood talks apart.*]

' *Sir Wil.* Why then let him hold his tongue in the mean time, and rail when that day comes.'

*Enter* Mincing.

*Minc.* Gentlemen, I come to acquaint you that dinner is impatient, and my lady waits.

*Sir Wil.* Impatient! Why then belike it won't stay 'till I pull off my boots. Sweetheart, can you help me to a pair of slippers?—My man's with his horses, I warrant.

*Mincing.* Fy, fy, Sir, you wou'd not pull off your boots here; you must go down into the hall.

' *Lady W.* Dinner shall stay for you. My nephew's little unbred, you'll pardon him. Gentlemen, will you walk? Marwood?

*Mrs. Mar.* I'll follow you, Madam, before Sir Wilfull is ready.

[*Exeunt.*]

*Fain.* Why then Foible's a bawd, an errant, rank, match-making bawd. And I, it seems, I am a husband, a rank-husband; and my wife a very errant, rank-wife,—all in the Way of the World. 'Sdeath, to be a cuckold by anticipation, a cuckold in embryo! ' Sure I was born with budding antlers, like a young satyr, or a citizen's child.'

‘ child.’ ‘ Sdeath to be out-witted, to be out-jilted — out-matrimony’d — If I had kept my speed like a stag, ’twere somewhat — but to crawl after, with my horns like a snail, and be out-stripp’d by my wife — ’tis scurvy wedlock.

*Mrs. Mar.* Then shake it off, you have often wish’d for an opportunity to part; — and now you have it. But first prevent their plot — the half of Millamant’s fortune is too considerable to be parted with to a foe, to Mirabell.

*Fain.* Damn him, that had been mine — had you not made that fond discovery — That had been forfeited, had they been married. My wife had added lustre to my horns, by that increase of fortune; I cou’d have worn ’em tipt with gold, tho’ my forehead had been furnish’d like a deputy-lieutenant’s hall.

*Mrs. Mar.* They may prove a cap of maintenance to you still, if you can away with your wife; ‘ and she’s no worse than when you had her. I dare swear she had given up her game before she was married.

‘ *Fain.* Hum! — That may be.

‘ *Mrs. Mar.* You married her to keep you; and if you can contrive to have her keep you better than you expected, why should you not keep her longer than you intended.’

*Fain.* The means! the means!

*Mrs. Mar.* Discover to my lady your wife’s conduct; threaten to part with her — My lady loves her, and will come to any composition to save her reputation. Take the opportunity of breaking it, just upon the discovery of this imposture. My lady will be enraged beyond bounds, and sacrifice niece, and fortune, and all at that conjuncture. And let me alone to keep her warm; if she should flag in her part, I will not fail to prompt her.

*Fain.* Faith, this has an appearance.

*Mrs. Mar.* I’m sorry I hinted to my lady to endeavour a match between Millamant and Sir Wilfull, that may be an obstacle.

*Fain.* Oh, for that matter, leave me to manage him; I’ll disable him for that. He will drink like a Dane; after dinner, I’ll set his hand in,

*Mrs.*

‘ *Mrs. Mar.* Well, how do you stand affected towards the lady ?

‘ *Fain.* Why faith, I’m thinking of it—Let me see—  
 ‘ I am married already, so that’s over—My wife has  
 ‘ played the jade with me—Well, that’s over too—I  
 ‘ never loved her, or if I had, why that would have been  
 ‘ over too by this time—Jealous of her I cannot be, for  
 ‘ I am certain ; so there’s an end of jealousy—Weary  
 ‘ of her I am, and shall be—No, there’s no end of that ;  
 ‘ no, no, that were too much to hope—Thus far con-  
 ‘ cerning my repose—Now for my reputation—As to  
 ‘ my own, I married not for it ; so that’s out of the  
 ‘ question—And as to my part in my wife’s—Why, she  
 ‘ had parted with her’s before ; so bringing none to me,  
 ‘ she can take none from me ; ’tis against all rule of  
 ‘ play, that I should lose to one who has not where-  
 ‘ withal to stake.

‘ *Mrs. Mar.* Besides, you forget ; marriage is honourable.

‘ *Fain.* Hum ! faith, and that’s well thought on ;  
 ‘ marriage is honourable, as you say ; and if so, where-  
 ‘ fore should cuckoldom be a discredit, being derived  
 ‘ from so honourable a root ?

‘ *Mrs. Mar.* Nay, I know not ; if the root be honourable, why not the branches ?

‘ *Fain.* So, so ; why this point’s clear’—Well, how do we proceed ?

*Mrs. Mar.* I will contrive a letter, which shall be delivered to my lady at the time when that rascal, who is to act Sir Rowland, is with her. It shall come as from an unknown hand—for the less I appear to know of the truth, the better I can play the incendiary. Besides, I would not have Foible provoked, if I could help it—because you know she knows some passages—Nay, I expect all will come out—But let the mine be sprung first, and then I care not if I am discovered.

*Fain.* If the worst come to the worst—I’ll turn my wife to grass—I have already a deed of settlement of the best part of her estate ; which I wheedled out of her ; and that you shall partake at least.

*Mrs. Mar.* I hope you are convinced that I hate Mirabell now ; you’ll be no more jealous ?

*Fain.*

*Fain.* Jealous, no——by this kiss——let husbands be jealous ; but let the lover still believe ; ‘ or, if he doubt, let it be only to endear his pleasure, and prepare the joy that follows, when he proves his mistress true : but let husband’s doubts convert to endless jealousy ; or, if they have belief, let it corrupt to superstition, and blind credulity ;’ I am single, and will herd no more with them. True, I wear the badge, but I’ll disown the order. And since I take my leave of them, I care not if I leave them a common motto to their common crest.

All husbands must, or pain, or shame, endure ;  
The wise too jealous are, fools too secure.

END of the THIRD ACT.

A C T IV.

SCENE *continues.*

*Lady Wishfort and Foible.*

LADY WISHFORT.

**I**S Sir Rowland coming, say’st thou, Foible? and are things in order?

*Foib.* Yes, Madam. I have put wax lights in the sconces ; and placed the footmen in a row in the hall, in their best liveries, with the coachman and postillion to fill up the equipage.

*Lady W.* Have you pulvilled the coachman and postillion, that they may not stink of the stable, when Sir Rowland comes by?

*Foib.* Yes, Madam.

*Lady W.* And are the dancers and the music ready, that he may be entertained in all points with correspondence to his passion?

*Foi.* All is ready, Ma’am.

*Lady W.* And——well——and how do I look, Foible?

*Foi.* Most killing well, Madam.

*Lady W.* Well, and how shall I receive him? In what figure shall I give his heart the first impression? There is a great deal in the first impression. Shall I sit?——No, I won’t sit——I’ll walk——ay, I’ll walk from the door upon



upon his entrance; and then turn full upon him—  
 No, that will be too sudden—I'll lie, ay, I'll lie down  
 —I'll receive him in my little dressing-room, there's a  
 couch—Yes, yes, I'll give the first impresson on a  
 couch—I won't lie neither, but loll and lean upon one  
 elbow; with one foot a little dangling off, jogging in a  
 thoughtful way—Yes—and then as soon as he ap-  
 pears, start; ay, start, and be surpris'd, and rise to meet  
 him in a pretty disorder—Yes—Oh, nothing is more  
 alluring than a levee from a couch in some confusion  
 —It shews the foot to advantage, and furnishes with  
 blushes, and recomposing airs beyond comparison. Hark!  
 There's a coach.

*Foib.* 'Tis he, Madam.

*Lady W.* Oh, dear, has my nephew made his addressees  
 to Millamant? I ordered him.

*Foib.* Sir Wilfull is set in to drinking, Madam, in the  
 parlour.

*Lady W.* Od's my life, I'll send him to her. Call her  
 down, Foible; bring her hither. I'll send him as I go.  
 When they are together, then come to me, Foible, that I  
 may not be too long alone with Sir Rowland.

[*Exit Lady W.*]

*Enter Mrs. Millamant and Mrs. Fainall.*

*Foib.* Madam, I stay'd here, to tell your ladyship that  
 Mr. Mirabell has waited this half hour for an opportu-  
 nity to talk with you. Though my lady's orders were to  
 leave you and Sir Wilfull together. Shall I tell Mr. Mi-  
 rabell that you are at leisure?

*Milla.* No—What would the dear man have? I am  
 thoughtful, and would amuse myself—Bid him come  
 another time.

There never yet was woman made,  
 Nor shall, but to be curs'd.

[*Repeating and walking about.*]

That's hard!

*Mrs. Fain.* You are very fond of Sir Jack Suckling to-  
 day, Millamant, and the poets.

*Milla.* He? Ay, and filthy verses—So I am.

*Foib.* Sir Wilfull is coming, Madam. Shall I send Mr.  
 Mirabell away?

*Milla.* Ay, if you please, Foible, send him away—

Or

Or fend him hither——just as you will, dear Foible——  
I think I'll see him—Shall I? Ay, let the wretch come.

Thyrfis, a youth of the inspired train. [*Repeating.*  
Dear Fainall, entertain Sir Wilfull——Thou hast philo-  
sophy to undergo a fool; thou art married and hast pa-  
tience—— I would confer with my own thoughts.

*Mrs. Fain.* I am obliged to you, that you would make  
me your proxy in this affair; but I have business of my  
own.

*Enter Sir Wilfull.*

*Mrs. Fain.* Oh, Sir Wilfull; you are come at the cri-  
tical instant. 'There's your mistress up to the ears in love  
and contemplation; pursue your point, now or never.

*Sir Wil.* Yes; my aunt will have it so——I would  
gladly have been encouraged with a bottle or two, be-  
cause I'm somewhat wary at first, before I'm acquainted:  
[*This while Millamant walks about repeating to herself.*]  
——But I hope, after a time, I shall break my mind—  
that is, upon further acquaintance——So for the present,  
cousin, I'll take my leave——If so be, you'll be so kind  
to make my excuse; I'll return to my company——

*Mrs. Fain.* Oh, fy, Sir Wilfull? What, you must not  
be daunted

*Sir Wil.* Daunted! No, that's not it; it is not so much  
for that—for if so be that I set on't, I'll do't. But only  
for the present, 'tis sufficient 'till further acquaintance,  
that's all——your servant.

*Mrs. Fain.* Nay, I'll swear you shall never lose so fa-  
vourable an opportunity, if I can help it. I'll leave you  
together, and lock the door. [*Exit Fain.*

*Sir Wil.* Nay, nay, cousin—I have forgot my gloves  
——What d'ye do? 'Sheart a'has locked the door indeed,  
I think——Nay, cousin Fainall, open the door——  
Psha! what a vixen trick is this?——Nay, now a'has  
seen me too——Cousin, I made bold to pass through as it  
were——I think this door's enchanted——

*Milla.* [*Repeating.*]

I pr'ythee spare me, gentle boy,  
Prefs me no more for that slight toy.

*Sir Wil.* Anan? Cousin, your servant.

*Milla.* That foolish trifle of a heart——Sir Wilfull?

*Sir Wil.* Yes——your servant. No offence, I hope,  
cousin.

*Milla.*

*Milla.* [*Repeating.*]

I swear it will do its part,

Tho' thou dost thine, employ'st thy power and art.

Natural, easy Suckling!

*Sir Wil.* Anan! Suckling! No such suckling neither, cousin, nor stripling: I thank Heaven, I'm no minor.

*Milla.* Ah, rustic, ruder than Gothic.

*Sir Wil.* Well, well, I shall understand your Lingo one of these days, cousin; in the mean while I must answer in plain English.

*Milla.* Have you any business with me, Sir Wilfull?

*Sir Wil.* Not at present, cousin——Yes, I made bold to see, to come and know, if that how you were disposed to fetch a walk this evening, if so be that I might not be troublesome, I would have sought a walk with you.

*Milla.* A walk? What then?

*Sir Wil.* Nay, nothing——Only for the walk's sake, that's all——

*Milla.* I nauseate walking; 'tis a country diversion; I loathe the country, and every thing that relates to it.

*Sir Wil.* Indeed! Hah! Look ye, look ye, you do? Nay, 'tis like you may——Here are choice of pastimes here in town, as plays and the like, that must be confessed indeed——

*Milla.* Ah, *Petourdie!* I hate the town too.

*Sir Wil.* Dear heart, that's much —— Hah! that you should hate 'em both! Hah! 'tis like you may; there are some can't relish the town, and others can't away with the country——'tis like you may be one of those, cousin.

*Milla.* Ha, ha, ha! Yes, 'tis like I may——You have nothing further to say to me?

*Sir Wil.* Not at present, cousin——'Tis like when I have an opportunity to be more private——I may break my mind in some measure——I conjecture you partly guess——However, that's as time shall try——But spare to speak and spare to speed, as they say.

*Milla.* If it is of no great importance, Sir Wilfull, you will oblige me to leave me: I have just now a little business.—

*Sir Wil.* Enough, enough, cousin: yes, yes, all a case——When you're disposed, when you're disposed. Now's as well as another time; and another time as well as now.

All's one for that—Yes, yes, if your concerns call you, there's no haste; it will keep cold as they say—Cousin, your servant—I think this door's locked.

*Milla.* You may go this way, Sir.

*Sir Wil.* Your servant, then with your leave I'll return to my company.

*Milla.* Ay, ay; ha, ha, ha! [Exit Sir Wil.  
Like Phœbus fung the no less am'rous boy.

*Enter Mirabell.*

*Mira.*—Like Daphne she, as lovely and as coy. Do you lock yourself up from me, to make my search more curious? Or, is this pretty artifice contrived, to signify that here the chace must end, and my pursuit be crowned, for you can fly no farther?—

*Milla.* Vanity! No——I'll fly and be followed to the last moment; though I am upon the very verge of matrimony, I expect you should solicit me as much as if I were wavering at the gate of a monastery, with one foot over the threshold. I'll be solicited to the very last, nay, and afterwards.

*Mira.* What, after the last?

*Milla.* 'Oh, if I should think I was poor, and had nothing to bestow, if I were reduced to an inglorious ease, and freed from the agreeable fatigues of solicitation.

'*Mir.* But don't you know, that when favours are conferred upon instant and tedious solicitation, that they diminish in their value, and that both the giver loses the grace, and the receiver lessens his pleasure.

'*Milla.* It may be in things of common application; but never sure in love'—Oh, I hate a lover that can dare to think he draws a moment's air, independent on the bounty of his mistress. There is not so impudent a thing in nature, as the saucy look of an assured man, confident of success. The pedantic arrogance of a very husband has not so pragmatical an air. Ah, I'll never marry, unless I am first made sure of my will and pleasure.

*Mira.* Would you have 'em both before marriage? Or will you be contented with the first now, and stay for the other 'till after grace?

*Milla.* Ah! don't be impertinent——My dear liberty,

berty, should I leave thee? My faithful solitude, my darling contemplation, must I bid you then adieu? Ah! adieu—My morning thoughts, agreeable wakings, indolent slumbers, ye *douccurs*, ye *semmeils du matin* adieu.—I can't doubt, 'tis more than impossible—Positively, Mirabell, I'll lie a-bed in a morning as long as I please.

*Mira.* Then I'll get up in a morning as early as I please.

*Milla.* Ay! idle creature, get up when you will—And, d'ye hear, I won't be call'd names after I'm married, positively I won't be called names.

*Mira.* Names!

*Milla.* Ay; as wife, spouse, my dear, joy, jewel, love, sweet-heart, and the rest of that nauseous cant, in which men and their wives are so fulsomely familiar—I shall never bear that—Good Mirabell, don't let us be familiar or fond, nor kiss before folks, like my lady Fuddle and Sir Francis: nor go to Hyde Park together the first Sunday in a new chariot, to provoke eyes and whispers, and then never be seen there together again; as if we were proud of one another the first week, and ashamed of one another ever after. Let us never visit together, nor go to a play together; but let us be very strange and well-bred: let us be as strange as if we had been married a great while; and as well-bred as if we were not married at all.

*Mir.* Have you any more conditions to offer? Hitherto your demands are pretty reasonable.

*Milla.* Trifles—As liberty to pay and receive visits to and from whom I please; to write and receive letters, without interrogatories or wry faces on your part; to wear what I please; and choose conversation with regard only to my own taste; to have no obligation upon me to converse with wits that I don't like, because they are your acquaintance; or to be intimate with fools, because they may be your relations. Come to dinner when I please; dine in my dressing-room when I'm out of humour, without giving a reason. To have my closet inviolate; to be sole empress of my tea-table, which you must never presume to approach without first asking leave. And lastly, wherever I am, you shall always knock at the door before you come in. These articles sub-

scribed, if I continue to endure you a little longer, I may by degrees dwindle into a wife.

*Mira.* Your bill of fare is something advanced in this latter account. Well, have I liberty to offer conditions — That when you are dwindled into a wife, I may not be beyond measure enlarged into a husband.

*Milla.* You have free leave; propose your utmost, speak and spare not.

*Mira.* I thank you. *Imprimis* then, I covenant that your acquaintance be general; that you admit no sworn confidant, or intimate of your own sex; ‘no she friend’ to screen her affairs under your countenance, and tempt ‘you to make trial of a mutual secrecy;’ no decoy-duck to wheedle you a fop-scrambling to the play in a mask — Then bring you home in a pretended fright, when you think you shall be found out — And rail at me for missing the play, and disappointing the frolic which you had to pick me up and prove my constancy.

*Milla.* Detestable *imprimis*! I go to the play in a mask!

*Mira.* *Item*, I article, that you continue to like your own face, as long as I shall: and while it passes current with me, that you endeavour not to new-coin it. To which end, together with all the vizards for the day, I prohibit all masks for the night, made of oiled skins, and I know not what — Hogs bones, hare’s gall, pig water, and the marrow of a roasted cat. *Item*, I shut my doors against all bawds with baskets, and penny-worths of muslin, china, fans, Atlasses, &c. — *Item*, when you shall be breeding — — —

*Milla.* Ah, name it not.

*Mira.* Which may be presumed, with a blessing on our endeavours — — —

*Milla.* Odious endeavours!

*Mira.* I denounce against all straight lacing, squeezing for a shape, till you mould my boy’s head like a sugar-loaf; and instead of a man child make me father to a crooked-brat. Lastly, to the dominion of the tea table I submit — But with proviso, that you exceed not in your province: but restrain yourself to native and simple tea-table drinks, as tea, chocolate, and coffee. As likewise to genuine and authorized tea-table talk — Such as  
mending

mending of fashions, spoiling reputations, railing at absent friends, and so forth—But that on no account you encroach upon the men's prerogative, and presume to drink healths, or toast fellows; for prevention of which I banish all foreign forces, all auxiliaries to the tea table, as orange brandy, all anniseed, cinnamon, citron and Barbadoes waters, together with ratafia, and the most noble spirit of clary.—But for cowslip wine, poppy water, and all dormitives, those I allow—These proviso's admitted, in other things I may prove a tractable and complying husband.

*Milla.* Oh, horrid proviso's! filthy strong waters! I toast fellows! Odious men! I hate your odious proviso's.

*Mira.* Then we're agreed. Shall I kiss your hand upon the contract? And here comes one to be a witness to the sealing of the deed.

*Enter Mrs. Fainall.*

*Milla.* Fainall, what shall I do? Shall I have him? I think I must have him.

*Mrs. Fain.* Ay, ay, take him, take him; what should you do?

*Milla.* Well then——I'll take my death, I'm in a horrid fright——Fainall, I shall never say it——Well——I think——I'll endure you.

*Mrs. Fain.* Fy, fy, have him, have him, and tell him so in plain terms: for I am sure you have a mind to him.

*Milla.* Are you? I think I have——and the horrid man looks as if he thought so too——Well, you ridiculous thing you, I'll have you——I won't be kissed, nor I won't be thanked——Here, kiss my hand though——So, hold your tongue now, don't say a word.

*Mrs. Fain.* Mirabell, there's a necessity for your obedience;——' You have neither time to talk nor stay: ' my mother is coming; and in my conscience, if she ' should see you, would fall into fits, and may be not ' recover time enough to return to Sir Rowland, who ' as Foible tells me, is in a fair way to succeed.' Therefore spare you extasies for another occasion, and slip down the back stairs, where Foible waits to consult you.

*Milla.* Ay, ay, go. In the mean time I'll suppose you have said something to please me.

*Mira.* I am all obedience. [Exit.]

*Mrs. Fain.* Yonder Sir Wilfull's drunk, and so noisy, that my mother has been forced to leave Sir Rowland to appease him; but he answers her only with singing and drinking—What they may have done by this time I know not; but Petulant and he were upon quarrelling as I came by.

*Milla.* Well, if Mirabell should not make a good husband, I am a lost thing—for I find I love him violently.

*Mrs. Fain.* So it seems; for you mind not what's said to you.—If you doubt him, you had best take up with Sir Wilfull.

*Milla.* How can you name that superannuated lubber? Foh!

*Enter Witwoud from drinking.*

*Mrs. Fain.* So, is the fray made up, that you have left them?

*Wit.* Left them! I could stay no longer—I have laughed like ten christenings—I am tipsy with laughing—If I had staid any longer I should have burst—I must have been let out and pieced in the sides like an unfizel gambler—Yes, yes, the fray is composed; my lady came in like a *noli prosequi*, and stopped the proceedings.

*Milla.* What was the dispute?

*Wit.* That's the jest; there was no dispute. They could neither of 'em speak for rage, and so fell a sputtering at one-another like two roasting apples.

*Enter Petulant drunk.*

Now, Petulant, all's over, all's well. Gad, my head begins to whim it about—Why dost thou not speak? Thou art both as drunk and as mute as a fish.

*Pet.* Look you, Mrs. Millamant—if you can love me, dear nymph—say it—and that's the conclusion—Pass on, or pass off—that's all.

*Wit.* Thou hast uttered volumes, folios, in less than *decimo sexto*, my dear Lacedemonian. Sirrah, Petulant, thou art an epitomizer of words.

*Pet.* Witwoud—You are an annihilator of sense.

*Wit.* Thou art a retailer of phrases; and dost deal in remnants of remnants, like a maker of pincushions—

Thou



Thou art, in truth, (metaphorically speaking) a speaker of short hand.

*Pet.* Thou art (without a figure) just one half of an ass, and Baldwin yonder, thy half brother, is the rest—A Gemini of asses split wou'd make just four of you.

*Wit.* Thou dost bite, my dear mustard-seed; kiss me for that.

*Pet.* Stand off—I'll kiss no more males—I have kiss'd your twin yonder in a humour of reconciliation, till he (*biccups*) rises upon my stomach like a raddish.

*Milla.* Eh! filthy creature—What was the quarrel?

*Pet.* There was no quarrel—There might have been a quarrel.

*Wit.* If there had been words enow between 'em to have express'd provocation, they had gone together by the ears like a pair of castanets.

*Pet.* You were the quarrel.

*Milla.* Me!

*Pet.* If I have a humour to quarrel, I can make less matters conclude premises—If you are not handsome, what then; if I have a humour to prove it? If I shall have my reward, say so; if not, fight for your face the next time yourself—I'll go sleep.

*Wit.* Do, wrap thyself up like a wood-louse, and dream revenge—And, hear me, if thou canst learn to write by to-morrow morning, pen me a challenge—I'll carry it for thee.

*Pet.* Carry your mistress's monkey a spider—go flea dogs, and read romances—I'll go to bed to my maid.

*Mrs. Fain.* He's horridly drunk—How came you all in this pickle?

*Wit.* A plot, a plot, to get rid of the knight—Your husband's advice, but he sneak'd off.

*Enter Sir Wilfull drunk; and Lady Wishfort.*

*Lady W.* Out upon't! out upon't! at years of discretion, and comport yourself at this rantipole rate.

*Sir Wil.* No offence, aunt.

*Lady W.* Offence! As I'm a person, I'm ashamed of you—Fough! how you stink of wine! D'ye think my niece will ever endure such a Borachio! you're an absolute Borachio!

*Sir Wil.* Borachio!

*Lady W.* At a time when you shou'd commence an amour, and put your best foot foremost——

*Sir Wil.* 'Sheart, an you grudge me your liquor, make a bill—— Give me more drink, and take my purse.

S O N G.

Pry'thee fill me the glafs  
 'Till it laugh in my face,  
 With ale that is potent and mellow;  
 He that whines for a las  
 Is an ignorant afs,  
 For a bumper has not its fellow.

But if you wou'd have me marry my cousin—— Say the word, and I'll do't—— Wilfull will do't, that's the word—— Wilfull will do't, that's my crest—— my motto I have forgot.

*Lady W.* My nephew's a little overtaken, cousin—but 'tis with drinking your health—— O' my word you are oblig'd to him.

*Sir Wil.* *In vino veritas*, aunt:—— If I drink your health to-day, cousin—I am a Borachio. But if you have a mind to be married, say the word, and send for the piper; Wilfull will do't. If not, dust it away, and let's have t'other round—— Tony! Ods heart where's 'Tony?—Tony's an honest fellow, but he spits after a bumper, and that's a fault.

*Sings.* We'll drink and we'll never have done, boys,  
 Put the glafs then around with the fun, boys,  
 Let Apollo's example invite us;  
 For he's drunk ev'ry night,  
 And that makes him so bright,  
 That he's able next morning to light us.

The fun's a good pimple, an honest soaker, he has a cellar at your Antipodes. If I travel, aunt, I touch at the Antipodes—your Antipodes are a good rascally sort of topsy-turvy fellows—If I had a bumper I'd stand upon my head and drink a health to 'em—A match or no match, cousin, with the hard name—Aunt, Wilfull will do't. ' If she has hēr maidenhead, let her  
 ' look

look to't; if she has not, let her keep her own counsel in the mean time, and cry out at the nine month's end.'

*Milla.* Your pardon, Madam, I can stay no longer—Sir Wilfull grows very powerful. Egh! how he smells! I shall be overcome if I stay. Come, cousin.

[*Exeunt Milla. and Mrs. Fain.*]

*Lady W.* Smells! he would poison a tallow-chandler and his family. Beastly creature! I know not what to do with him.—Travel, quotha! ay, travel, travel, get thee gone; get thee but far enough; to the Saracens or the Tartars, or the Turks, for thou art not fit to live in a Christian commonwealth, thou beastly Pagan.

*Sir Wil.* Turks! no, no, Turks, aunt; your Turks are Infidels, and believe not in the grape; your Mahometan, your Mussulman is a dry stinkard—No offence, aunt. My map says, that your Turk is not so honest a man as your Christian. I cannot find by the map, that your Mustri is orthodox; whereby it is a plain case, that orthodox is a hard word, aunt, and (*biccups*) Greek for ciaret.

*Sings.* To drink is a Christian diversion  
Unknown to the Turk and the Persian;  
Let Mahometan fools  
Live by Heathenish rules,  
And be damn'd over tea-cups and coffee.  
But let British lads sing  
Crown a health to the King,  
And a fig for your Sultan and Sophy.

Ah, Tony!

[*Enter Foible and whispers Lady Wishfort.*]

*Lady W.* Sir Rowland impatient! Good lack! what shall I do with this beastly tumbrel?—Go lie down and sleep, you sot—Or, as I'm a person, I'll have you bastinado'd with broom-sticks. Call up the wenches with broom-sticks.

*Sir Wil.* Ahey! wenches: where are the wenches?

*Lady W.* Dear cousin Witwoud: get him away, and you will bind me to you inviolably. I have an affair of moment that invades me with some precipitation—  
You will oblige me to all futurity.

*Wit.*

*Wit.* Come, knight—Pox on him, I don't know what to say to him—Will you go to a cock-match?

*Sir Wit.* With a wench, Tony? Is she a shake-bag, firrah? Let me bite your cheek for that.

*Wit.* Horrible! he has a breath like a bagpipe—Ay, ey, come, will you march, my Salopian?

*Sir Wil.* Lead on, little Tony—I'll follow thee, my Anthony, my Tantony. Sirrah, thou shalt be my Tantony, and I'll be thy Pig.

—And a fig for your Sultan and Sophy.

[*Exeunt Sir Wil. and Wit.*]

*Lady W.* This will never do. It will never make a match:—at least before he has been abroad.

*Enter Waitwell disguis'd as for Sir Rowland.*

Dear Sir Rowland, I am confounded with confusion at the retrospection of my own rudeness—I have more pardons to ask than the Pope distributes in the year of Jubilee. But I hope where there is likely to be so near an alliance—we may unbend the severity of decorum—and dispense with a little ceremony.

*Wait.* My impatience, Madam, is the effect of my transport—And till I have the possession of your adorable person, I am tantaliz'd on the rack; and do but hang, Madam, on the tenter of expectation.

*Lady W.* You have excess of gallantry, Sir Rowland; and press things to a conclusion, with a most prevailing vehemence.—But a day or two for decency of marriage—

*Wait.* For decency of funeral, Madam. The delay will break my heart—or, if that should fail, I shall be poisoned. My nephew will get an inkling of my designs, and poison me—and I would willingly starve him before I die—I would gladly go out of the world with that satisfaction—That would be some comfort to me, if I could but live so long as to be reveng'd on that unnatural viper.

*Lady W.* Is he so unnatural, say you? Truly, I would contribute much both to the saving of your life, and the accomplishment of your revenge—Not that I respect myself; tho' he has been a perfidious wretch to me.

*Wait.* Perfidious to you!

*Lady W.*

*Lady W.* O Sir Rowland, the hours that he has died away at my feet, the tears that he has shed, the oaths that he has sworn, the palpitations that he has felt, the trances and the tremblings, the ardours and the extacies, the kneelings and the risings, the heart-heavings and the hand-gripings, the pangs and the pathetic regards of his protesting eyes! Oh, no memory can register.

*Wait.* What, my rival! Is the rebel my rival? a' dies.

*Lady W.* No! don't kill him at once, Sir Rowland, starve him gradually inch by inch.

*Wait.* I'll do't. In three weeks he shall be barefoot; in a month out at knees with begging an alms—He shall starve upward and upward, 'till he has nothing living but his head, and then go out in a stink like a candle's end upon a save-all.

*Lady W.* Well, Sir Rowland, you have the way—You are no novice in the labyrinth of love—You have the clue—But as I am a person, Sir Rowland, you must not attribute my yielding to any sinister appetite—I hope you do not think me prone to any iteration of nuptials.

*Wait.* Far be it from me—

*Lady W.* If you do, I protest I must recede—or think that I have made a prostitution of decorum; but in the vehemence of compassion, and to save the life of a person of so much importance.

*Wait.* I esteem it so.

*Lady W.* Or else you wrong my condescension.—

*Wait.* I do not, I do not—

*Lady W.* Indeed you do.

*Wait.* I do not, fair shrine of virtue.

*Lady W.* If thou think the least scruple of carnality was an ingredient—

*Wait.* Dear Madam, No. You are all camphire and frankincense, all chastity and odour.

*Lady W.* Or that—

*Enter Foible.*

*Foib.* Madam, 'The dancers are ready, and' there's one with a letter, who must deliver it into your own hands.

*Lady W.*

*Lady W.* Sir Rowland, will you give me leave? Think favourably, judge candidly, and conclude you have found a person who would suffer racks in honour's cause, dear Sir Rowland, and will wait on you incessantly.

[*Exit Lady W.*

*Wait.* Fy, fy!—What a slavery have I undergone? Spouse, hast thou any cordial? I want spirits.

*Foib.* What a washy rogue art thou, to pant thus for a quarter of an hour's lying and swearing to a fine lady?

*Wait.* O, she is the antidote to desire. 'Spouse, thou wilt fare the worse for't—I shall have no appetite to 'iteration of nuptials—this eight and forty hours.' By this hand, I'd rather be a chairman in the dog-days, than act Sir Rowland till this time to-morrow.

*Re-enter Lady Wishfort, with a letter.*

*Lady W.* 'Call in the dancers;—Sir Rowland, we'll sit, if you please, and see the entertainment. [*Dance.* Now, with your permission, Sir Rowland, I will peruse my letter—I would open it in your presence, because I would not make you uneasy. If it should make you uneasy, I would burn it—speak, if it does—but you may see the superscription is like a woman's hand.

*Foib.* By heaven! Mrs. Marwood's, I know it—my heart akes—Get it from her— [*To bim.*

*Wait.* A woman's hand! No, Madam, that's no woman's hand, I see that already. That's some body whose throat must be cut.

*Lady W.* Nay, Sir Rowland, since you give me a proof of your passion, by your jealousy, I promise you I'll make a return, by a frank communication—you shall see it—we'll open it together—look you here. [*Reads*] "Madam, though unknown to you," Look you there, 'tis from no body that I know.—"I have that honour for your character, that I think myself obliged to let you know you are abused. He who pretends to be Sir Rowland, is a cheat and a rascal." Oh heavens! what's this?

*Foib.* Unfortunate, all's ruin'd.

*Wait.* How, how, let me see, let me see—[*Reading,*] "A rascal, and disguis'd and suborn'd for that imposture"—O villany! O villany! "by the contrivance of"—

*Lady W.*

*Lady W.* I shall faint, I shall die, oh!

*Foib.* Say 'tis your nephew's hand—Quickly, his plot, swear, swear it.—— [To him.

*Wait.* Here's a villain, Madam, don't you perceive it, don't you see it?

*Lady W.* Too well, too well. I have seen too much.

*Wait.* I told you at first I knew the hand—A woman's hand! The rascal writes a sort of a large hand; your Roman hand—I saw there was a throat to be cut presently. If he were my son, as he is my nephew, I'd pistol him——

*Foib.* O treachery! But are you sure, Sir Rowland, it is his writing?

*Wait.* Sure! Am I here? do I live? Do I love this pearl of India? I have twenty letters in my pocket from him, in the same character.

*Lady W.* How!

*Foib.* O what luck it is, Sir Rowland, that you were present at this juncture! This was the business that brought Mr. Mirabell disguis'd to Madam Millamant this afternoon. I thought something was contriving, when he stole by me, and would have hid his face.

*Lady W.* How, how——I heard the villain was in the house, indeed; and now I remember, my niece went away abruptly, when Sir Wiltull was to have made his addresses.

*Foib.* Then, then Madam, Mr. Mirabell waited for her in her chamber; but I would not tell your ladyship to discompose you when you were to receive Sir Rowland.

*Wait.* Enough, his date is short.

*Foib.* No, good Sir Rowland, don't incur the law.

*Wait.* Law! I care not for law. I can but die, and 'tis in a good cause——My lady shall be satisfied of my truth and innocence, though it cost me my life.

*Lady W.* No, dear Sir Rowland, don't fight; if you should be killed, I must never shew my face; 'O consider my reputation, Sir Rowland.—No, you shan't fight, I'll go in and examine my niece; I'll make her confess.'—I conjure you, Sir Rowland, by all your love, not to fight.

*Wait.*

*Wait.* I am charmed, Madam; I obey. But some proof you must let me give you. I'll go for a black box, which contains the writings of my whole estate, and deliver that into your hands.

*Lady W.* Ay, dear Sir Rowland, that will be some comfort; bring the black box.

*Wait.* And may I presume to bring a contract, to be signed this night? May I hope so far?

*Lady W.* Bring what you will; but come alive. Pray, come alive. 'Oh, this is a happy discovery!'

*Wait.* Dead or alive, I'll come; and married we will be, in spite of treachery; ay, and get an heir that shall defeat the last remaining glimpse of hope in my abandoned nephew. Come, my buxom widow:

Ere long you shall substantial proof receive  
That I'm an arrant knight——

*Foib.* ——— Or arrant knave.

[*Exeunt.*]

END of the FOURTH ACT.

A C T V.

SCENE *continues.*

*Enter Lady Wishfort and Foible.*

LADY WISHFORT.

**O**UT of my house, out of my house, thou viper, thou serpent, that I have fostered; thou bosom traitress, that I raised from nothing——Begone, begone, begone, go, go—that I took from washing of old gauze, and weaving of dead hair, with a bleak blue nose, over a chafing-dish of starv'd embers, and dining behind a traverse rag, in a shop no bigger than a bird-cage. Go, go, starve again; do, do.

*Foib.* Dear Madam, I'll beg pardon on my knees.

*Lady W.* Away, out, out; go, set up for yourself again, do; drive a trade, do, with your three-penny-worth of small ware, flaunting upon a pack-thread, under a brandy-seller's bulk, or against a dead wall, by a ballad-monger. Go, hang out an old frisoner gorger, with a yard of yellow colberteen again, do; an old gnawed



gnawed mask, two rows of pins, and a child's fiddle; a glass necklace, with the beads broken, and a quilted night-cap, with one ear; go, go, drive a trade. These were your commodities, you treacherous trull; this was the merchandize you dealt in, when I took you into my house, placed you next myself, and made you governante of my whole family. You have forgot this, have you, now you have feathered your nest?

*Foib.* No, no, dear Madam. Do but hear me; have but a moment's patience; I'll confess all. Mr. Mirabell seduced me. I am not the first that he has wheedled with his dissembling tongue: your ladyship's own wisdom has been deluded by him; then how should I, a poor ignorant, defend myself? Oh, Madam, if you knew but what he promised me, and how he assured me your ladyship should come to no damage! or else the wealth of the Indies should not have bribed me to conspire against so good, so sweet, so kind a lady as you have been to me.

*Lady W.* No damage! What, to betray me, to marry me to a cast serving-man; to make me a receptacle, an hospital for a decayed pimp! No damage! Oh, thou frontless impudence, 'more than a big-bellied actress!'

*Foib.* Pray, do but hear me, Madam. He could not marry your ladyship, Madam: no, indeed, his marriage was to have been void in law; for he was married to me first, to secure your ladyship. He could not have bedded your ladyship; for if he had consummated with your ladyship, he must have run the risque of the law, and been put upon his clergy—Yes, indeed, I enquired of the law, in that case, before I would meddle or make.

*Lady W.* What, then, I have been your property, have I? I have been convenient to you, it seems, while you were catering for Mirabell. I have been broker for you. What, have you made a passive bawd of me? This exceeds all precedent. I am brought to fine uses, to be come a botcher of second-hand marriages between Abigail and Andrews. I'll couple you; yes, I'll baste you together, you and your Philander. I'll Duke's-Place you, as I'm a perion. Your turtle is in custody already: you shall coo in the same cage, if there be constable or warrant in the parish.

G

[Exit.  
*Foib.*

*Foib.* Oh, that ever I was born ! Oh, that ever I was married !—A bride ! ay, I shall be a Bridewell bride. Oh !

*Enter Mrs. Fainall.*

*Mrs. Fain.* Poor Foible ! what's the matter ?

*Foib.* Oh, Madam, my Lady's gone for a constable ! I shall be had to a justice, and put to Bridewell, to beat hemp. Poor Waitwell's gone to prison already.

*Mrs. Fain.* Have a good heart, Foible ; Mirabell is gone to give security for him. This is all Marwood's and my husband's doing.

*Foib.* Yes, I know it, Madam ; she was in my Lady's closet, and overheard all that you said to me before dinner. She sent the letter to my Lady ; and that missing effect, Mr. Fainall laid this plot to arrest Waitwell, when he pretended to go for the papers ; and in the mean time, Mrs. Marwood declared all to my Lady.

*Mrs. Fain.* Was there no mention made of me in the letter ? My mother does not suspect my being in the confederacy : I fancy Marwood has not told her, tho' she has told my husband.

*Foib.* Yes, Madam ; but my Lady did not see that part : we stifled the letter before she read so far. Has that mischievous devil told Mr. Fainall of your ladyship, then ?

*Mrs. Fain.* Ay, all's out, my affair with Mirabell, every thing discovered. This is the last day of our living together, that's my comfort.

*Foib.* Indeed, Madam, and so it is a comfort, if you knew all. He has been even with your ladyship ; which I could have told you long enough since ; but I love to keep peace and quietness by my good will. I had rather bring friends together, than set them at a distance. But Mrs. Marwood and he are nearer related than ever their parents thought for.

*Mrs. Fain.* Sayst thou so, Foible ? Canst thou prove this ?

*Foib.* I can take my oath of it, Madam, so can Mrs. Mincing ; we have had many a fair word from Madam Marwood, to conceal something that passed in our chamber, one evening, when you were at Hyde Park ; and we were thought to have gone a walking ; but we went up unawares--Though we were sworn to secrecy too ; Madam  
Marwood

Marwood took a book, and swore us upon it; but it was but a book of poems: so long as it was not a bible-oath, we may break it with a safe conscience.

*Mrs. Fain.* This discovery is the most opportune thing I could wish. Now, Mincing—

*Enter Mincing.*

*Minc.* My Lady would speak with Mrs. Foible, Mem. Mr. Mirabell is with her: he has set your spouse at liberty, Mrs. Foible, and would have you hide yourself in my Lady's closet, till my old Lady's anger is abated. Oh, my old Lady is in a perilous passion at something Mr. Fainall has said—He swears, and my old Lady cries. There's a fearful hurricane, I vow. He says, Mem, how that he'll have my Lady's fortune made over to him, or he'll be divorced.

*Mrs. Fain.* Does your Lady, or Mirabell, know that?

*Minc.* Yes, Mem; they have sent me to see if Sir Willfull be sober, and to bring him to them. My Lady is resolved to have him, I think, rather than lose such a vast sum as six thousand pounds. Oh, come, Mrs. Foible; I hear my old Lady.

*Mrs. Fain.* Foible, you must tell Mincing, that she must prepare to vouch, when I call her.

*Foib.* Yes, yes, Madam.

*Minc.* Oh, yes, Mem, I'll vouch any thing for your ladyship's service, be what it will. [*Ex. Foib. and Minc.*]

*Enter Lady Wishfort and Marwood.*

*Lady W.* Oh, my dear friend! how can I enumerate the benefits that I have received from your goodness? To you I owe the timely discovery of the false vows of Mirabell; to you I owe the detection of the impostor, Sir Rowland; and now you are become an intercessor with my son-in-law, to save the honour of my house, and compound for the frailties of my daughter. Well, friend, you are enough to reconcile me to the bad world, or else I would retire to deserts and solitudes, and feed harmless sheep by groves and purling streams. Dear Marwood, let us leave the world, and retire by ourselves, and be shepherdesses.

*Mrs. Mar.* Let us first dispatch the affair in hand, Madam; we shall have leisure to think of retirement afterwards. Here is one who is concerned in the treaty.

*Lady W.* Oh, daughter, daughter! is it possible thou shouldst be my child, bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh, and, as I may say, another Me, and yet transgress the most minute particle of severe virtue? 'Is it possible you should lean aside to iniquity, who have been cast in the direct mould of virtue? I have not only been a mould, but a pattern for you, and a model for you, after you were brought into the world.'

*Mrs. Fain.* I don't understand your ladyship.

*Lady W.* Not understand! Why, have you not been naught? Have you not been sophisticated? Not understand! Here I am ruined to compound for your caprices and your cuckoldums. I must pawn my plate and my jewels, and ruin my niece, and all little enough —

*Mrs. Fain.* I'm wronged and abused, and so are you. 'Tis a false accusation, as false as hell, as false as your friend there, ay, or your friend's friend, my false husband.

*Mrs. Mar.* My friend, Mrs. Fainall! Your husband my friend! What do you mean?

*Mrs. Fain.* I know what I mean, Madam, and so do you; and so shall the world, at a time convenient.

*Mrs. Mar.* I am sorry to see you so passionate, Madam. More temper would look more like innocence. But I have done. I am sorry my zeal to serve your ladyship and family, should admit of misconstruction, or make me liable to affronts. You will pardon me, Madam, if I meddle no more with an affair, in which I am not personally concerned.

*Lady W.* Oh, dear friend! I am so ashamed that you should meet with such returns—You ought to ask pardon on your knees, ungrateful creature! she deserves more from you, than all your life can accomplish. Oh, don't leave me destitute in this perplexity. No, stick to me, my good genius.

*Mrs. Fain.* I tell you, Madam, you're abused. Stick to you! ay, like a leach, to suck your best blood—she'll drop off when she's full. Madam, you shan't pawn a bodkin, nor part with a brass counter, in composition for me. I defy them all. Let them prove their aspersions. I know my own innocence, and dare stand a trial. [*Exit.*]

*Lady W.* Why, if she should be innocent; if she should  
be

be wronged after all, ha?——I don't know what to think——' And, I promise you, her education ' has been very unexceptionable. I may say it: for ' I chiefly made it my own care to initiate her very ' infancy in the rudiments of virtue, and to impreis ' upon her tender years a young odium and aversion to ' the very sight of men——ay, friend, she would ha' ' shriek'd, if she had but seen a man, till she was in her ' teens. As I'm a person, 'tis true. She was never suf- ' fered to play with a male child, tho' but in coats; nay, ' her very babies were of the feminine gender. Oh, she ' never looked a man in the face, but her own father, or ' the chaplain, and him we made a shift to put upon her ' for a woman, by the help of his long garments, and his ' sleek face, 'till she was going in her fifteen.

' *Mrs. Mar.* 'Twas much the should be deceived so ' long.

' *Lady W.* I warrant you, or she would never have ' borne to have been catechized by him, and have heard ' his long lectures against singing and dancing, and such ' debaucheries; and going to filthy plays, and profane ' music-meetings, where the lewd trebles squeak nothing ' but bawdy, and the basses roar blasphemy. Oh, she ' would have swooned at the sight or name of an ob- ' scene play-book! And can I think, after all this, that ' my daughter can be naught? What, a whorë, and ' thought it excommunication to set her foot within the ' door of a playhouse?' Oh, dear friend, I can't believe it! No, no, as she says, let him prove it, let him prove it.

' *Mrs. Mar.* Prove it, Madam! what, and have your name prostituted in a public court: yours and your daughter's reputation worried at the bar, by a pack of bawling lawyers? To be ushered in with an O Yes of scandal; ' and ' have your case opened by an old fumbling letcher in a ' coif, like a man-midwife, to bring your daughter's infamy ' to light; to be a theme for legal punsters, and quibblers ' by the statute; and become a jest, against a rule of court, ' where there is no precedent for a jest in any record, ' not even in Doomsday-book; to discompose the gravity ' of the bench, and provoke naughty interrogatories in ' more naughty law Latin; while the good judge, tick- ' led with the proceeding, simpers under a grey beard.

‘ and fidges off and on his cushion, as if he had swallowed  
‘ cantharides, or fat upon cow-itch.’

*Lady W.* Oh, 'tis very hard!

‘ *Mrs. Mar.* And then to have my young revellers of,  
‘ the Temple take notes, like 'prentices at a conventicle,  
‘ and after talk it over again in Commons, or before draw-  
‘ ers in an eating-house.

‘ *Lady W.* Worse and worse!’

*Mrs. Mar.* Nay, this is nothing; if it would end here  
'twere well. But it must, after this, be consigned by the  
short-hand writers to the public press; and from thence  
be transferred to the hands, nay, into the throats and  
lungs of hawkers, ‘ with voices more licentious than the  
‘ loud flounder-man’s:’ and this you must hear till you  
are stunned; nay, you must hear nothing else for some  
days.

*Lady W.* Oh, 'tis insupportable! No, no, dear friend,  
make it up, make it up; ay, ay, I'll compound; I'll give  
up all, myself and my all, my niece and her all; any thing,  
every thing for composition.

*Mrs. Mar.* Nay, Madam, I advise nothing; I only lay  
before you, as a friend, the inconveniencies which, per-  
haps, you have overseen. Here comes Mr. Fainall; if  
he will be satisfied to huddle up all in silence, I shall be  
glad. You must think I would rather congratulate than  
condole with you.

*Enter Fainall.*

*Lady W.* Ay, ay, I do not doubt it, dear Marwood.  
No, no, I do not doubt it.

*Fain.* Well, Madam, I have suffered myself to be over-  
come by the importunity of this lady, your friend; and  
am content you shall enjoy your own proper estate during  
life, on condition you oblige yourself never to marry,  
under such penalty as I think convenient.

*Lady W.* Never to marry!

*Fain.* No more Sir Rowlands—the next imposture may  
not be so timely detected.

‘ *Mrs. Mar.* That condition, I dare answer, my Lady  
‘ will consent to, without difficulty; she has already but  
‘ too much experienced the perfidiousness of men. Be-  
‘ sides, Madam, when we retire to our pastoral solitude,  
‘ we shall bid adieu to all other thoughts.

‘ *Lady*

*Lady W.* Ay, that's true; but in case of necessity, as of health, or some such emergency——

*Fain.* Oh, if you are prescribed marriage, you shall be considered; I will only reserve to myself the power to choose for you. If your physic be wholesome, it matters not who is your apothecary.' Next, my wife shall settle on me the remainder of her fortune, not made over already; and for her maintenance depend entirely on my discretion.

*Lady W.* This is most inhumanly savage; 'exceeding the barbarity of a Muscovite husband.'

*Fain.* 'I learned it from his Czarish majesty's retinue, in a winter evening's conference, over brandy and pepper, amongst other secrets of matrimony and policy, as they are at present practised in the northern hemisphere. But this must be agreed unto, and that positively.' Lastly, I will be endowed, in right of my wife, with that six thousand pounds, which is the moiety of Mrs. Millamant's fortune in your possession; and which she has forfeited (as will appear by the last will and testament of your deceased husband, Sir Jonathan Wishfort) for her disobedience, in contracting herself without your consent or knowledge; and by refusing the offered match with Sir Wilfull Witwoud, which you, like a careful aunt, had provided for her.

*Lady W.* My nephew was *non compos*, and could not make his addresses.

*Fain.* I come to make demands——I'll hear no objections.

*Lady W.* You will grant me time to consider?

*Fain.* Yes, while the instrument is drawing, to which you must set your hand till more sufficient deeds can be perfected; which I will take care shall be done with all possible speed. In the mean while, I will go for the said instrument; and, till my return, you may balance this matter in your own discretion. [Exit.

*Lady W.* This insolence is beyond all precedent, all parallel! Must I be subject to this merciless villain?

*Mrs. Mar.* 'Tis severe indeed, Madam, that you should smart for your daughter's wantonness.

*Lady W.* 'I was against my consent that she married this barbarian; but she would have him, tho' her year was

not

not out——Ah, her first husband, my son Languish, would not have carried it thus. Well, that was my choice, this is hers; she is matched now with a witness——I——shall be mad; dear friend, is there no comfort for me? Must I live to be confiscated at this rebel-rate?——Here come two more of my Egyptian plagues too.

*Enter Millamant and Sir Wilfull.*

*Sir Wil.* Aunt, your servant.

*Lady W.* Out, caterpillar, call not me aunt? I know you not.

*Sir Wil.* I confess I have been a little in disguise, as they say——'Sheart, and I'm sorry for't. What would you have? I hope I committed no offence, aunt——and if I did, I am willing to make satisfaction; and what can a man say fairer? If I have broke any thing I'll pay for't, an it cost a pound. And so let that content for what's past, and make no more words. For what's to come, to pleasure you I'm willing to marry my cousin. So pray let's all be friends, she and I are agreed upon the matter before a witness.

*Lady W.* How's this, dear niece? Have I any comfort? Can this be true?

*Milla.* I am content to be a sacrifice to your repose, Madam, and to convince you that I had no hand in the plot, as you are misinformed, I have laid my commands on Mirabell to come in person, and be a witness that I give my hand to this flower of knighthood; and for the contract that passed between Mirabell and me, I have obliged him to make a resignation of it in your Ladyship's presence——He is without, and waits your leave for admittance.

*Lady W.* Well, I'll swear I am something revived at this testimony of your obedience; but I cannot admit that traitor——I fear I cannot fortify myself to support his appearance. He is as terrible to me as a Gorgon; if I see him, I fear I shall turn to stone, petrify incessantly.

*Milla.* If you disoblige him, he may resent your refusal, and insist upon the contract still. Then 'tis the last time he will be offensive to you.

*Lady*



*Lady W.* Are you sure it will be the last time?—If I were sure of that—shall I never see him again?

*Milla.* Sir Wilfull, you and he are to travel together, are you not?

*Sir Wil.* 'Sheart, the gentleman's a civil gentleman; aunt, let him come in; why we are sworn brothers and fellow travellers.—We are to be Pylades and Orestes, he and I—He is to be my interpreter in foreign parts. He has been over-seas once already; and with proviso that I marry my cousin, will cross 'em once again, only to bear me company.—'Sheart, I'll call him in—an I set on't once, he shall come in; and see who'll hinder him.

[Goes to the door and hems.]

*Mrs. Mar.* This is precious fooling, if it would pass; but I'll know the bottom of it.

*Lady W.* Oh, dear Marwood, you are not going?

*Mrs. Mar.* Not far, Madam; I'll return immediately.

[Exit Mrs. Mar.]

*Sir Wil.* Look up, man, I'll stand by you; 'sbud an she do frown, she can't kill you;—besides—harkee, she dare not frown desperately, because her face is none of her own? 'Sheart, an she should, her forehead would wrinkle like the coat of a cream cheese; but mum for that, fellow-traveller.

*Mira.* If a deep sense of the many injuries I have offered to so good a lady, with a sincere remorse, and a hearty contrition, can but obtain the least glance of compassion, I am too happy—' Ah, Madam, there was a time—but let it be forgotten—I confess I have deservedly forfeited the high place I once held of fighting at your feet; nay, kill me not, by turning from me in disdain—I come not to plead for favour; nay, not for pardon; I am suppliant only for pity'—I am going where I never shall behold you more—

*Sir Wil.* How, fellow-traveller?—You shall go by yourself then.

*Mira.* Let me be pitied first, and afterwards forgotten—I ask no more.

*Sir Wil.* By'r Lady, a very reasonable request, and will cost you nothing, aunt—Come, come, forgive and forget, aunt; why you must an you are a Christian.

*Mira.* At least think it is punishment enough, that I have lost what in my heart I hold most dear; that to  
your

your cruel indignation I have offered up this beauty, and with her my peace and quiet; nay, all my hopes of future comfort.

*Sir Wil.* An he does not move me, would I may never be of the Quorum—An it were not as good a deed as to drink, to give her to him again,—I would I might never take shipping—Aunt, if you don't forgive quickly, I shall melt, I can tell you that, my contract went no farther than a little mouth-glue, and that's hardly dry:—one doleful sigh more from my fellow-traveller, and 'tis dissolved.

*Lady.* Well, nephew, upon your account—Ah, he has a false insinuating tongue—Well, Sir, I will stifle my just resentment at my nephew's request— I will endeavour what I can to forget—but on proviso that you resign the contract with my niece immediately.

*Mira.* It is in writing, and with papers of concern; but I have sent my servant for it, and will deliver it to you, with all acknowledgments for your transcendent goodness.

*L. W.* Oh, he has witchcraft in his eyes and tongue; when I did not see him, I could have bribed a villain to his assassination; but his appearance rakes the embers which have so long lain smothered in my breast.

[*Aside.*

*Enter Mr. Fainall and Mrs. Marwood.*

*Fain.* Your date of deliberation, Madam, is expired. Here is the instrument; are you prepared to sign?

*Lady; W.* If I were prepared, I am not impowered. My niece exerts a lawful claim, having matched herself by my directions to Sir Wilfull.

*Fain.* That sham is too gross to pass on me—though 'tis imposed upon you, Madam.

*Milla.* Sir, I have given my consent.

*Mira.* And, Sir, I have resigned my pretensions.

*Sir Wil.* And, Sir, I assert my right; and will maintain it in defiance of you, Sir, and of your instrument. 'Sheart an you talk of an instrument, Sir, I have an old fox by my thigh shall hack your instrument of ram velum to shreds, Sir. It shall not be sufficient for a mittimus, or a taylor's measure; therefore withdraw your instrument, or by'r Lady I shall draw mine.

*Lady*

*Lady W.* Hold, nephew, hold.

*Milla.* Good Sir Wilfull, respite your valour.

*Fain.* Indeed! Are you provided of your guard, with your single beef-eater there. But I'm prepared for you; and insist upon the first proposal. You shall submit your own estate to my management, and absolutely make over my wife's to my sole use; as pursuant to the purport and tenor of this other covenant—I suppose, Madam, your consent is not requisite in this case; nor, Mr. Mirabell, your resignation; nor, Sir Wilfull, your right.—You may draw your fox if you please, Sir, and make a bear-garden flourish somewhere else: for here it will not avail. This, my lady Wishfort, must be subscribed, or your darling daughter's turned a-drift, like a leaky hulk, to sink or swim, as she and the current of this lewd town can agree.

*Lady W.* 'Is there no means, no remedy to stop my 'ruin?' Ungrateful wretch! dost thou not owe thy being, thy subsistence, to my daughter's fortune?

*Fain.* I'll answer you when I have the rest of it in my possession.

*Mira.* But that you would not accept of a remedy from my hands—'I own I have not deserved you should 'owe any obligation to me;' or else perhaps I could advise——

*Lady W.* Oh, what? what? To save me and my child from ruin, from want, I'll forgive all that's past; nay, I'll consent to any thing to come, to be delivered from this tyranny.

*Mira.* Ay, Madam: but that's too late, my reward is intercepted. You have disposed of her, who only could have made me a compensation for all my services:—— But be it as it may, I am resolved I'll serve you; you shall not be wronged in this savage manner.

*Lady W.* How! Dear Mr. Mirabell? Can you be so generous at last! But it is not possible. Harkee, I'll break my nephew's match; you shall have my niece yet, and all her fortune, if you can but save me from this imminent danger.

*Mira.* Will you? I take you at your word. I ask no more. I must have leave for two criminals to appear.

*Lady W.* Ay, ay, any body, any body.

*Mira.*

*Mira.* Foible is one, and a penitent.

*Enter Mrs. Fainall, Foible, and Mincing.*

*Mrs. Mar.* Oh, my shame! These corrupt things are brought hither to expose me. [To Fain.

[*Mira. and Lady go to Mrs. Fain and Foib.*

*Fain.* If it must all come out, why let them know it; 'tis but the Way of the World. That shall not urge me to relinquish or abate one tittle of my terms; no, I will insist the more.

*Foib.* Yes indeed, Madam, I'll take my bible oath of it.

*Min.* And so will I, Mem.

*Lady W.* Oh, Marwood, Marwood, art thou false? My friend deceive me! Hast thou been a wicked accomplice with that profligate man?

*Mrs. Mar.* Have you so much ingratitude and injustice, to give credit against your friend to the aspersions of two such mercenary trulls?

*Minc.* Mercenary, Mem! I scorn your words! 'Tis true we found you and Mr. Fainall in the blue garret; by the same token, you swore us to secrecy upon Mesfalina's poems. Mercenary! No, if we would have been mercenary, we should have held our tongues; you would have bribed us sufficiently.

*Fain.* Go, you are an insignificant thing — Well, what are you the better for this? Is this Mr. Mirabell's expedient; I'll be put off no longer — You, thing, that was a wife, shall smart for this. I will not leave thee wherewithal to hide thy shame: your body shall be naked as your reputation.

*Mrs. Fain.* I despise you, and defy your malice — You have aspersed me wrongfully — I have proved your falsehood — Go, you and your treacherous — I will not name it, but starve together — Perish.

*Fain.* Not while you are worth a groat, indeed, my dear. Madam, I'll be fool'd no longer.

*Lady W.* Ah, Mr. Mirabell, this is small comfort, the detection of this affair.

*Mira.* O, in good time — your leave for the other offender and penitent to appear, Madam.

*Enter Waitwell, with a box of writings.*

*L. W.* O, Sir Rowland — Well, rascal.

*Wait.* What your ladyship pleases—I have brought the black box at last, Madam.

*Mira.* Give it me. ‘Madam, you remember your promise.

‘*Lady W.* Ay, dear Sir.’

*Mira.* Where are the gentlemen?

*Wait.* At hand, Sir, rubbing their eyes—just risen from sleep.

*Fain.* ‘Sdeath, what’s this to me? I’ll not wait your private concerns.

*Enter Petulant and Witwoud.*

*Pet.* How now? What’s the matter? Whose hand’s out?

*Wit.* Hey-day! what are you all got together, like players at the end of the last act?

*Mira.* You may remember, gentlemen, I once requested your hands as witnesses to a certain parchment.

*Wit.* Ay, I do, my hand I remember.—Petulant set his mark.

*Mira.* You wrong him, his name is fairly written, as shall appear—you do not remember, gentlemen, any thing of what the parchment contained——

[*Undoing the box.*

*Wit.* No.

*Pet.* Not I. I writ, I read nothing.

*Mira.* Very well, now you shall know—‘Madam, your promise.

‘*Lady W.* Ay, ay, Sir, upon my honour.’

*Mira.* Mr. Fainall, it is now time that you should know, that your lady, while she was at her own disposal, and before you had by your insinuations wheedled her out of a pretended settlement of the greatest part of her fortune——

*Fain.* Sir! pretended!

*Mira.* Yes, Sir. I say that this lady, while a widow, having, it seems, received some cautions respecting your inconstancy and tyranny of temper, ‘which from her own partial opinion and fondness of you, she could never have suspected,’ she did, I say, by the wholesome advice of friends, and of sages learned in the laws of this land, deliver this same, as her act and deed, to me in trust, and to the uses within mentioned. You may read, if you

Please—[*Holding out the parchment*] though perhaps what is written on the back may serve your occasions.

*Fain.* Very likely, Sir. What's here? Damnation! [*Reads.*] "A deed of conveyance of the whole estate real of Arabella Languish, widow, in trust to Edward Mirabell." Confusion!

*Mira.* Even, so, Sir, 'tis the Way of the World, Sir; of the widows of the world. I suppose this deed may bear an elder date than what you have obtained from your lady.

*Fain.* Perfidious fiend! then thus I'll be reveng'd—  
[*Offers to run at Mrs. Fain.*]

*Sir Wil.* Hold, Sir! now you may make your bear-garden flourish somewhere else, Sir.

*Fain.* Mirabell, you shall hear of this, Sir, be sure you shall———Let me pass, oaf. [*Exit.*]

*Mrs. Fain.* Madam, you seem to stifle your resentment: you had better give it vent.

*Mrs. Mar.* Yes, it shall have vent———and to your confusion, or I'll perish in the attempt. [*Exit Mrs. Mar.*]

*Lady W.* O daughter, daughter, 'tis plain thou hast inherited thy mother's prudence.

*Mrs. Fain.* Thank Mr. Mirabell, a cautious friend, to whose advice all is owing.

*Lady W.* Well, Mr. Mirabell, you have kept your promise,—and I must perform mine.—First, I pardon, for your sake, Sir Rowland there, and Foible——The next thing is to break the matter to my nephew—and how to do that———

*Mira.* For that, Madam, give yourself no trouble,—let me have your consent—Sir Wilfull is my friend; he has had compassion upon lovers, and generously engaged a volunteer in this action, for our service; and now designs to prosecute his travels.

*Sir Wil.* 'Sheart, aunt, I have no mind to marry. My cousin's a fine lady, and the gentleman loves her, and she loves him, and they deserve one another; my resolution is to see foreign parts——I have set on't——and when I'm set on't, I must do't. And if these two gentlemen wou'd travel too, I think they may be spared.

*Pet.* For my part, I say little—I think things are best off or not.

*Wit.* I gad, I understand nothing of the matter—I'm in a maze yet, like a dog in a dancing-school.

*Lady W.* Well, Sir, take her, and with her all the joy I can give you.

*Milla.* Why does not the man take me? Would you have me give myself to you over again?

*Mira.* Ay, and over and over again; [*Kisses her hand.*] I would have you as often as possibly I can. Well heaven grant I love you not too well, that's all my fear.

*Sir Wil.* 'Sheart, you'll have time enough to toy after you're marry'd; 'or if you will toy now, let us have a dance in the mean time; that we who are not lovers may have some other employment besides looking on.

'*Mira.* With all my heart, dear Sir Wilfull. What shall we do for music?

'*Foib.* O, Sir, some that were provided for Sir Rowland's entertainment, are yet within call. [*A dance.*']

*Lady W.* As I am a person I can hold out no longer—I have wasted my spirits so to-day already, that I am ready to sink under the fatigue; and I cannot but have some fear upon me yet, that my son Fainall, will pursue some desperate course.

*Mira.* Madam, disquiet not yourself on that account; to my knowledge, his circumstances are such, he must of force comply; 'for my part I will contribute all that in me lies, to a re-union.' In the mean time, Madam, [*To Mrs. Fain.*] let me, before these witnessess, restore to you this deed of trust; it may be a means, well managed, to make you live easily together.

From hence let those be warn'd, who mean to wed;  
Lest mutual falshood stain the bridal-bed:  
For each deceiver to his cost may find,  
That marriage-frauds, too oft are paid in kind.

[*Exeunt.*]

END of the FIFTH ACT.

## E P I L O G U E.

**AFTER** our Epilogue this croud dismisses,  
 I'm thinking how this play'll be pull'd to pieces.  
 But pray consider, e're you doom its fall,  
 How hard a thing 'twould be, to please you all.  
 There are some critics so with spleen diseas'd,  
 They scarcely come, inclining to be pleas'd:  
 And sure he must have more than mortal skill,  
 Who pleases any one against his will.  
 Then all bad poets, we are sure are foes,  
 And how their number's swell'd, the town well knows;  
 In shoals, I've mark'd 'em, judging in the pit;  
 Tho' they're on no pretence for judgment fit,  
 But that they have been damn'd for want of wit. }  
 Since when, they, by their own offences taught,  
 Set up for spies on plays, and finding fault.  
 Others there are, whose malice we'd prevent;  
 Such, who watch plays, with scurrilous intent }  
 To mark out who by characters are meant:  
 And tho' no perfect likenesses they can trace;  
 Yet each pretends to know the copy'd face.  
 These, with false glosses, feed their own ill-nature,  
 And turn to libel, what was meant a satire.  
 May such malicious fops this fortune find,  
 To think themselves alone the fools design'd:  
 If any are so arrogantly vain, }  
 To think they singly can support a scene,  
 And furnish fool enough to entertain. }  
 For well the learn'd and the judicious know,  
 That satire scorns to stoop so meanly low,  
 As any one abraded fop to shew. }  
 For, as when painters form a matchless face,  
 They from each fair one, catch some diff'rent grace;  
 And shining features in one portrait blend,  
 To which no single beauty must pretend:  
 So poets oft, do in one piece expose,  
 Whole belles assemblées of coquets and beaux.



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his

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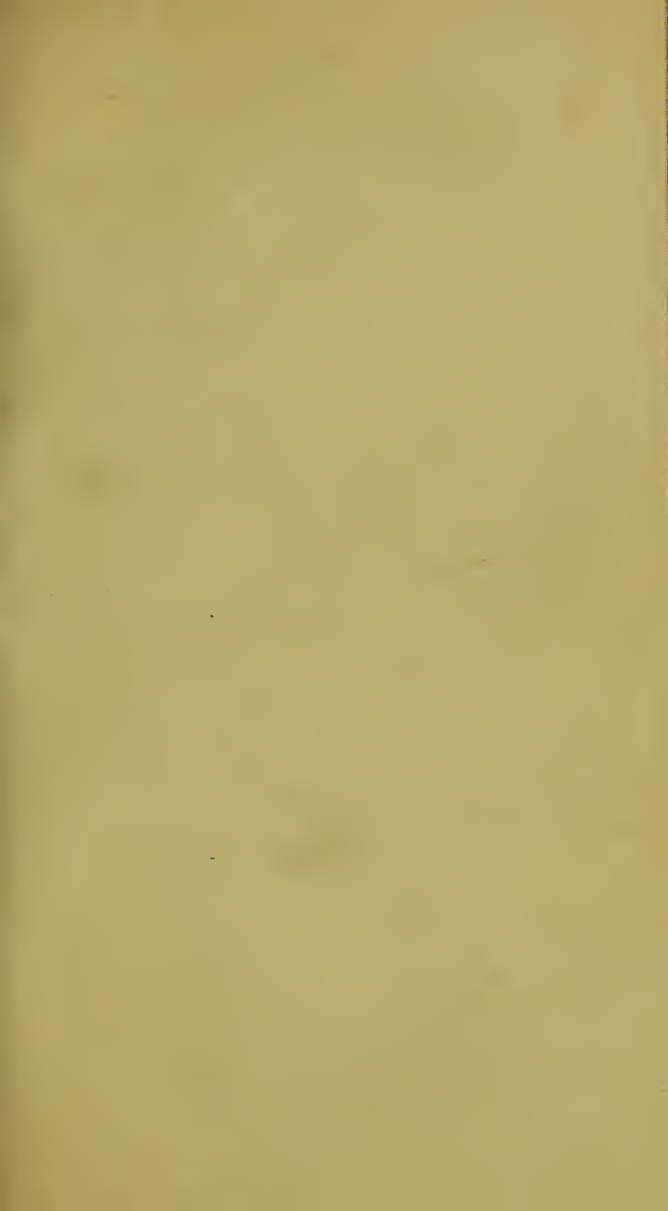
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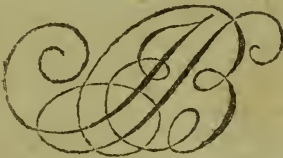
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—*Neque enim lex æquior ulla,  
Quàm necis artifices arte perire suâ.*

OVID, de Arte Am.



LONDON:

Printed for JOHN BELL, near Exeter-Exchange, in the Strand;  
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MDCCLXXVI.





To her Royal Highness the

# P R I N C E S S.

MADAM,

**T**HAT high station, which, by your birth, you hold above the people, exacts from every one, as a duty, whatever honours they are capable of paying to your Royal Highness: but that more exalted place, to which your virtues have raised you, above the rest of princes, makes the tribute of our admiration and praise, rather a choice, more immediately preventing that duty. The public gratitude is ever founded on a public benefit; and what is universally blessed, is always an universal blessing. Thus, from yourself we derive the offerings which we bring; and that incense which arises to your name, only returns to its original, and but naturally requires the parent of its being.

From hence it is, that this poem, constituted on a moral whose end it is to recommend and to encourage virtue, of consequence, has recourse to your Royal Highness's patronage; aspiring to cast itself beneath your feet, and declining approbation, 'till you shall condescend to own it, and vouchsafe to shine upon it, as on a creature of your influence.

It is from the example of princes, that virtue becomes a fashion in the people; for even they who are averse to instruction, will yet be fond of imitation.

But there are multitudes who never can have means nor opportunities of so near an access, as to partake of the benefit of such examples. And, to these, tragedy, which distinguishes itself from the vulgar poetry by the dignity of its characters, may be of use and information. For they who are at that distance from original greatness, as to be deprived of the happiness of contemplating the perfections, and real excellencies of your Royal Highness's person in your court, may yet behold some small sketch-

es and imagings of the virtues of your mind, abstracted, and represented on the theatre.

Thus poets are instructed, and instruct; not alone by precepts which persuade, but also by examples which illustrate. Thus is delight interwoven with instruction; when not only virtue is prescribed, but also represented.

But if we are delighted with the liveliness of a feigned representation of great and good persons and their actions, how must we be charmed with beholding the persons themselves? If one or two excelling qualities, barely touched in the single action and small compass of a play, can warm an audience with a concern and regard even for the seeming success and prosperity of the actor, with what zeal must the hearts of all be filled for the continued and encreasing happiness of those who are the true and living instances of elevated and persisting virtue? Even the vicious themselves must have a secret veneration for those peculiar graces and endowments which are daily so eminently conspicuous in your Royal Highness; and, though repining, feel a pleasure, which, in spite of envy, they per-force approve.

If, in this piece, humbly offered to your Royal Highness, there shall appear the resemblance of any of those many excellencies which you so promiscuously possess, to be drawn so as to merit your least approbation, it has the end and accomplishment of its design. And however imperfect it may be in the whole, through the inexperience or incapacity of the author; yet if there is so much as to convince your Royal Highness, that a play may be, with industry, so disposed (in spite of the licentious practice of the modern theatre) as to become sometimes an innocent, and not unprofitable entertainment; it will abundantly gratify the ambition, and recompense the endeavours of

Your Royal Highness's

Most obedient, and

Most humbly devoted servant,

WILLIAM CONGREVE.

P R O-

## P R O L O G U E.

**T**H E time has been, when plays were not so plenty,  
 And a less number, new, would well content ye,  
 New plays did then like almanacks appear,  
 And one was thought sufficient for a year :  
 Though they are more like almanacks of late ;  
 For in one year, I think, they're out of date.  
 Nor were they, without reason, join'd together ;  
 For just as one prognosticates the weather,  
 How plentiful the crop, or scarce the grain,  
 What peals of thunder, or what showers of rain ;  
 So t'other can foretel, by certain rules,  
 What crops of coxcombs, or what floods of fools.  
 In such like prophecies were poets skill'd,  
 Which now they find in their own tribe fulfill'd.  
 The dearth of wit they did so long presage,  
 Is fallen on us, and almost starves the stage.  
 Were you not griev'd, as often as you saw  
 Poor actors thresh such empty sheafs of straw ?  
 Toiling and lab'ring at their lungs' expence,  
 To start a jest, or force a little sense ?  
 Hard fate for us, still harder in th' event ;  
 Our authors sin, but we alone repent.  
 Still they proceed, and, at our charge, write worse ;  
 'Twere some amends, if they could reimburse ;  
 But there's the devil, tho' their cause is lost,  
 There's no recovering damages or cost.  
 Good wits, forgive this liberty we take,  
 Since custom gives the losers leave to speak.  
 But if, provok'd, your dreadful wrath remains,  
 Take your revenge upon the coming scenes :  
 For that damn'd poet's spar'd, who damns a brother,  
 As one thief 'scapes that executes another.  
 Thus far alone does to the wits relate ;  
 But from the rest we hope a better fate.  
 To please, and move, has been our poet's theme,  
 Art may direct, but nature is his aim ;

*And nature mis's'd, in vain he boasts his art,  
 For only nature can affect the heart.  
 Then freely judge the scenes that shall ensue;  
 But as with freedom, judge with candour too.  
 He would not lose, thro' prejudice, his cause;  
 Nor wou'd obtain, precariously, applause.  
 Impartial censure he requests from all,  
 Prepar'd, by just decrees, to stand or fall.*

---

## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

### M E N.

<i>Manuel</i> , the king of Granada,	Mr. Aickin.
<i>Gonsalez</i> , his favourite,	Mr. Packer.
<i>Garcia</i> , son to <i>Gonsalez</i> ,	Mr. Davies.
<i>Perez</i> , captain of the guards,	Mr. Norris.
<i>Alonzo</i> , an officer, creature to <i>Gonsalez</i> ,	Mr. Wrighten.
<i>Osmyn</i> , a noble prisoner,	Mr. Smith.
<i>Heli</i> , a prisoner, his friend,	Mr. Hurst.
<i>Selim</i> , an eunuch,	Mr. Fawcett.

### W O M E N.

<i>Almeria</i> , the princess of Granada,	Mrs. Yates.
<i>Zara</i> , a captive queen,	Miss Younge.
<i>Leonora</i> , chief attendant on the princess,	Mrs. Johnston.

Women, eunuchs, and mutes attending *Zara*, guards, &c.

## SCENE, GRANADA.

T H E

# Mourning Bride.

A T R A G E D Y.

Taken from the

M A N A G E R ' s B O O K ,

A T T H E

Theatre-Royal, Covent-Garden.

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M. DCC. LXXXVII.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

COVENT-GARDEN.

M E N.

Manuel,	—	—	<i>Mr. Clarke.</i>
Gonzalez,	—	—	<i>Mr. Hull.</i>
Garcia,	—	—	<i>Mr. Whitfield.</i>
Perez,	—	—	<i>Mr. Thompson.</i>
Alonzo,	—	—	<i>Mr. Fearon.</i>
Osmyn,	—	—	<i>Mr. Lewis.</i>
Heli,	—	—	<i>Mr. Davies.</i>
Selim,	—	—	<i>Mr. Booth.</i>

W O M E N.

Almeria,	—	—	<i>Miss Bruntin.</i>
Zara,	—	—	<i>Miss Younge.</i>
Leonora,	—	—	<i>Miss Platt.</i>

*Women, Eunuchs, and Mutes, attending Zara, Guards, &c.*

SCENE, GRANADA.

T H E  
MOURNING BRIDE.

---

A C T I.

SCENE, *a room of state.*

*The curtain rising slowly to soft music, discovers Almeria in mourning, Leonora waiting in mourning.*

*After the music, Almeria rises from her chair, and comes forward.*

ALMERIA.

**M**USIC has charms to sooth a savage breast,  
To soften rocks, or bend a knotted oak.  
I've read, that things inanimate have mov'd,  
And as with living souls, have been inform'd,  
By magic numbers and persuasive sound.  
What then am I? Am I more senseless grown  
Than trees or flint? Oh, force of constant woe!  
'Tis not in harmony to calm my griefs.  
Anselmo sleeps, and is at peace; last night  
The silent tomb receiv'd the good old king;  
He and his sorrows now are safely lodg'd  
Within its cold, but hospitable bosom.  
Why am not I at peace?

*Leon.* Dear Madam, cease,  
Or moderate your grief; there is no cause——

*Alm.* No cause! Peace, peace; there is eternal cause,  
And misery eternal will succeed.  
Thou canst not tell—thou hast indeed no cause.

*Leon.* Believe me, Madam, I lament Anselmo,  
And always did compassionate his fortune;  
Have often wept, to see how cruelly  
Your father kept in chains his fellow-king:

## S THE MOURNING BRIDE.

And oft, at night, when all have been retir'd,  
 Have stol'n from bed, and to his prison crept ;  
 Where, while his gaoler slept, I thro' the grate  
 Have softly whisper'd, and enquir'd his health ;  
 Sent in my sighs and pray'rs for his deliv'rance ;  
 For sighs and pray'rs were all that I could offer.

*Alm.* Indeed thou hast a soft and gentle nature.  
 That thus could melt to see a stranger's wrongs.  
 Oh, Leonora, hadst thou known Anselmo,  
 How wou'd thy heart have bled to see his sufferings !  
 Thou hadst no cause, but general compassion.

*Leon.* Love of my royal mistress gave me cause ;  
 My love of you begot my grief for him ;  
 For I had heard, that when the chance of war  
 Had bless'd Anselmo's arms with victory,  
 And the rich spoil of all the field, and you,  
 The glory of the whole, were made the prey  
 Of his success ; ' that then, in spite of hate,  
 ' Revenge, and that hereditary feud  
 ' Between Valentia's and Granada's kings,'  
 He did endear himself to your affection,  
 By all the worthy and indulgent ways  
 His most industrious goodness cou'd invent ;  
 Proposing, by a match between Alphonso  
 His son, the brave Valentian prince, and you,  
 To end the long dissention, and unite  
 The jarring crowns.

' *Alm.* Alphonso ! O, Alphonso !  
 ' Thou too art quiet—long hast been at peace—  
 ' Both, both——father and son are now no more.  
 ' Then why am I ? Oh, when shall I have rest ?  
 ' Why do I live to say you are no more ?  
 ' Why are all these things thus ?—Is it of force ?  
 ' Is there necessity I must be miserable ?  
 ' Is it of moment to the peace of Heav'n  
 ' That I shou'd be afflicted thus ?——If not,  
 ' Why is it thus contriv'd ? Why are things laid  
 ' By some unseen hand, so, as of sure consequence,  
 ' They must to me bring curses, grief of heart,  
 ' The last distress of life, and sure despair ?  
 ' *Leon.* Alas ! you search too far, and think too deeply.'  
*Alm.* Why was I carry'd to Anselmo's court ?



Or there, why was I us'd so tenderly ?  
 Why not ill treated, like an enemy ?  
 For so my father wou'd have us'd his child.  
 Oh, Alphonso, Alphonso !  
 Devouring seas have wash'd thee from my sight.  
 No time shall raze thee from my memory ;  
 No, I will live to be thy monument :  
 The cruel ocean is no more thy tomb :  
 But in my heart thou art interr'd ; there, there,  
 Thy dear resemblance is for ever fix'd ;  
 My love, my lord, my husband still, tho' lost.

*Leon.* Husband ! Oh, Heav'ns !

*Alm.* Alas ! what have I said ?

My grief has hurry'd me beyond all thought.  
 I wou'd have kept that secret ; though I know  
 Thy love, and faith to me deserve all confidence.  
 ' But 'tis the wretch's comfort still to have  
 ' Some small reserve of near and inward woe,  
 ' Some unsuspected hoard of darling grief,  
 ' Which they unseen may wail, and weep, and mourn,  
 ' And, glutton-like, alone devour.

*Leon.* Indeed,

' I knew not this.

*Alm.* Oh, no, thou know'st not half,

' Know'st nothing of my sorrows—if thou didst—

' If I shou'd tell thee, would'st thou pity me ?

' Tell me ; I know thou would'st ; thou art compassionate.

*Leon.* Witness these tears——

*Alm.* I thank thee, Leonora——

' Indeed I do, for pitying thy sad mistress :

' For 'tis, alas ! the poor prerogative

' Of greatness to be wretched, and unpitied——

' But I did promise I wou'd tell thee—What ?

' My miseries ? Thou dost already know 'em.

' And when I told thee thou didst nothing know,

' It was because thou didst not know Alphonso :

' For to have known my loss, thou must have known

' His worth, his truth, and tenderness of love.'

*Leon.* The memory of that brave prince stands fair

In all report—

And I have heard imperfectly his loss ;

But

But fearful to renew your troubles past,  
I never did presume to ask the story.

*Alm.* If for my swelling heart I can, I'll tell thee.  
I was a welcome captive in Valentia,  
E'en on the day when Manuel, my father,  
Led on his conqu'ring troops high as the gates  
Of king Anselmo's palace; which in rage,  
And heat of war, and dire revenge, he fir'd.  
The good king flying to avoid the flames,  
Started amidst his foes, and made captivity  
His fatal refuge—Wou'd that I had fall'n  
Amidst those flames—but 'twas not so decreed.  
Alphonso, who foresaw my father's cruelty,  
Had borne the queen and me on board a ship  
Ready to sail; and when this news was brought  
We put to sea; but being betray'd by some  
Who knew our flight, we closely were pursu'd,  
And almost taken; when a sudden storm  
Drove us, and those that follow'd, on the coast  
Of Afric: There our vessel struck the shore  
And bulging 'gainst a rock, was dash'd in pieces;  
But Heav'n spar'd me for yet much more affliction!  
Conducting them who follow'd us, to shun  
The shore, and save me floating on the waves,  
While the good queen and my Alphonso perish'd.

*Leon.* Alas! were you then wedded to Alphonso?

*Alm.* That day, that fatal day, our hands were join'd.  
For when my lord beheld the ship pursuing,  
And saw her rate so far exceeding ours,  
He came to me, and begg'd me by my love,  
I wou'd consent the priest shou'd make us one;  
That whether death or victory ensu'd  
I might be his, beyond the power of fate:  
The queen too did assist his suit—I granted;  
And in one day was wedded and a widow,

*Leon.* Indeed 'twas mournful—

*Alm.* 'Twas—as I have told thee—  
For which I mourn, and will for ever mourn;  
Nor will I change these black and dismal robes,  
Or ever dry these swoln and watery eyes;

Or ever taste content, or peace of heart,  
While I have life, and thought of my Alphonso.

‘ Leon. Look down, good Heav’n, with pity on her  
sorrows,

‘ And grant that time may bring her some relief.

‘ Alm. Oh, no ! time gives increase to my afflictions.

‘ The circling hours, that gather all the woes

‘ Which are diffus’d thro’ the revolving year,

‘ Come heavy laden with th’ oppressing weight

‘ To me ; with me, successively, they leave

‘ The sighs, the tears, the groans, the restless cares,

‘ And all the damps of grief, that did retard their flight :

‘ They shake their downy wings, and scatter all

‘ The dire collected dews on my poor head :

‘ Then fly with joy and swiftness from me.’

[Shouts at a distance.

Leon. Hark !

The distant shouts proclaim your father’s triumph.

O cease, for Heav’n’s sake, assuage a little

This torrent of your grief, for, much I fear,

’Twill urge his wrath, to see you drown’d in tears,

When joy appears in ev’ry other face.

Alm. And joy he brings to ev’ry other heart,

But double, double weight of woe to mine :

For with him Garcia comes—Garcia, to whom

I must be sacrific’d, and all the vows

I gave my dear Alphonso basely broken.

No, it shall never be ; for I will die

First, die ten thousand deaths—Look down, look down,

Alphonso, hear the sacred vow I make ; [Kneels.

‘ One moment, cease to gaze on perfect blifs,

‘ And bend thy glorious eyes to earth and me ;’

And thou, Anselmo, if yet thou art arriv’d

Thro’ all impediments of purging fire,

To that bright Heav’n, where my Alphonso reigns,

Behold thou also, and attend my vow.

If ever I do yield, or give consent,

By any action, word, or thought, to wed

Another lord ; may then just Heav’n show’r down

Unheard of curses on me, greater far

(If such there be in angry Heaven’s vengeance)

Than

Than any I have yet endur'd—And now [*Rising.*]  
 My heart has some relief; having so well  
 Discharg'd this debt, incumbent on my love.  
 Yet, one thing more I wou'd engage from thee.

*Leon.* My heart, my life, and will, are only yours.

*Alm.* I thank thee. 'Tis but this: anon, when all  
 Are wrapp'd and busied in the general joy,  
 Thou wilt withdraw, and privately with me  
 Steal forth, to visit good Anselmo's tomb.

*Leon.* Alas! I fear some fatal resolution.

*Alm.* No, on my life, my faith, I mean no ill,  
 Nor violence—I feel myself more light,  
 And more at large, since I have made this vow.  
 Perhaps I would repeat it there more solemnly.  
 'Tis that, or some such melancholy thought,  
 Upon my word, no more.

*Leon.* I will attend you.

*Enter Alonzo.*

*Alon.* The lord Gonfalez comes to tell your highness  
 The king is just arriv'd.

*Alm.* Conduct him in.

[*Exit Alon.*]

That's his pretence; his errand is, I know,  
 To fill my ears with Garcia's valiant deeds;  
 And gild and magnify his son's exploits.  
 But I am arm'd with ice around my heart,  
 Not to be warm'd with words, or idle eloquence.

*Enter Gonfalez.*

*Gon.* Be ev'ry day of your long life like this.  
 The sun, bright conquest, and your brighter eyes,  
 Have all conspir'd to blaze promiscuous light,  
 And bless this day with most unequal lustre.  
 Your royal father, my victorious lord,  
 Loaden with spoils, and ever-living laurel,  
 Is ent'ring now, in martial pomp, the palace.  
 Five hundred mules precede his solemn march,  
 Which groan beneath the weight of Moorish wealth.  
 Chariots of war, adorn'd with glitt'ring gems,  
 Succeed; and next, a hundred neighing steeds,  
 White as the fleecy rain on Alpine hills,  
 That bound and foam, and champ the golden bit,  
 As they disdain'd the victory they grace.  
 Prisoners of war in shining fetters follow:

And captains of the noblest blood of Afric  
 Sweat by his chariot wheels, ' and lick and grind,  
 ' With gnashing teeth, the dust his triumphs raise.'  
 The swarming populace spread every wall,  
 ' And cling, as if with claws they did enforce  
 ' Their hold; thro' clefted stones stretching and staring,  
 ' As if they were all eyes, and every limb  
 ' Would feed its faculty of admiration :'  
 While you alone retire, and shun this sight ;  
 This sight, which is indeed not seen (tho' twice  
 The multitude should gaze) in absence of your eyes.

*Alm.* My lord, mine eyes ungratefully behold  
 The gilded trophies of exterior honours.  
 Nor will my ears be charm'd with sounding words,  
 Or pompous phrase, the pageantry of souls.  
 But that my father is return'd in safety,  
 I bend to Heav'n with thanks.

*Gon.* Excellent princess !  
 But 'tis a task unfit for my weak age  
 With dying words to offer at your praise.  
 Garcia, my son, your beauty's lowest slave,  
 Has better done ; in proving with his sword  
 The force and influence of your matchless charms.

*Alm.* I doubt not of the worth of Garcia's deeds,  
 Which had been brave, though I had ne'er been born.

*Leon.* Madam, the king. [Flourish.

' *Alm.* My women. I wou'd meet him.'

[Attendants to Almeria enter in mourning.

*Symphony of warlike music.* Enter the King, attended by  
 Garcia and several officers. Files of prisoners in chains,  
 and guards, who are ranged in order round the stage.  
 Almeria meets the King, and kneels: afterwards Gonfa-  
 lez kneels and kisses the King's hand, while Garcia does  
 the same to the princess.

*King.* Almeria, rise—My best Gonfalez, rise.  
 What, tears ! my good old friend—

*Gon.* But tears of joy.

Believe me, Sir, to see you thus, has fill'd  
 Mine eyes with more delight than they can hold.

*King.* By Heav'n, thou lov'st me, and I'm pleas'd thou  
 dost ;

Take it for thanks, old man, that I rejoice

To see thee weep on this occasion—Some  
 Here are, who seem to mourn at our success!  
 Why is't, Almeria, that you meet our eyes,  
 Upon this solemn day, in these sad weeds?  
 In opposition to my brightness, you  
 And yours are all like daughters of affliction.

*Alm.* Forgive me, Sir, if I in this offend.  
 The year, which I have vow'd to pay to Heav'n,  
 In mourning and strict life, for my deliv'rance  
 From wreck and death, wants yet to be expir'd.

*King.* Your zeal to Heav'n is great, so is your debt:  
 Yet something too is due to me, who gave  
 That life, which Heav'n preserv'd. A day bestow'd  
 In filial duty, had atton'd and given  
 A dispensation to your vow—No more.

'Twas weak and wilful—and a woman's error.  
 Yet, upon thought, it doubly wounds my sight,  
 To see that sable worn upon the day,  
 Succeeding that, in which our deadliest foe,  
 Hated Anselmo, was interr'd—By Heav'n,  
 It looks as thou didst mourn for him: just so  
 Thy senseless vow appear'd to bear its date,  
 Not from that hour wherein thou wert preserv'd,  
 But that wherein the curs'd Alphonso perish'd.  
 Ha! What? thou dost not weep to think of that!

*Gon.* Have patience, royal Sir; the princess weeps  
 To have offended you. If fate decreed,  
 One pointed hour should be Alphonso's loss,  
 And her deliverance, is she to blame?

*King.* I tell thee she's to blame, not to have feasted  
 When my first foe was laid in earth, such enmity,  
 Such detestation bears my blood to his;  
 My daughter should have revell'd at his death,  
 She should have made these palace walls to shake,  
 And all this high and ample roof to ring  
 With her rejoicings. What, to mourn and weep!  
 Then, then to weep, and pray, and grieve! by Heav'n,  
 There's not a slave, a shackled slave of mine,  
 But should have smil'd that hour, through all his care,  
 And shook his chains in transport and rude harmony.

*Gon.* What she has done, was in excess of goodness;

Betray'd by too much piety, to seem  
As if she had offended.— Sure, no more.

*King.* To seem is to commit, at this conjuncture.  
I wo't not have a seeming sorrow seen  
To-day.— Retire; divest yourself with speed  
Of that offensive black; on me be all  
The violation of your vow; for you  
It shall be your excuse, that I command it..

*Gar.* [*Kneeling.*] Your pardon, Sir, if I presume so far,  
As to remind you of your gracious promise.

*King.* Rise, Garcia—I forgot. Yet stay, Almeria.

*Alm.* My boding heart!—What is your pleasure, Sir?

*King.* Draw near, and give your hand, and, Garcia,  
yours:

Receive this lord, as one whom I have found  
Worthy to be your husband, and my son.

*Gar.* Thus let me kneel to take—O not to take---  
But to devote, and yield myself for ever  
The slave and creature of my royal mistress.

*Gon.* O let me prostrate pay my worthless thanks---

*King.* No more; my promise long since pass'd, thy  
services

And Garcia's well-try'd valour, all oblige me.  
This day we triumph; but to-morrow's sun,  
Garcia, shall shine to grace thy nuptials——

*Alm.* Oh!

[*Faints.*

*Gar.* She faints! help to support her.

*Gonf.* She recovers.

*King.* 'A fit of bridal fear.' How is't, Almeria?

*Alm.* A sudden chillness seizes on my spirits.

Your leave, Sir, to retire.

*King.* Garcia, conduct her.

[*Garcia leads Almeria to the door, and returns.*

This idle vow hangs on her woman's fears,

'I'll have a priest shall preach her from her faith,

'And make it sin, not to renounce that vow

'Which I'd have broken.' Now, what would Alonzo?

*Enter Alonzo.*

*Alon.* Your beauteous captive, Zara, is arriv'd,  
And with a train as if she still were wife  
To Albucaim, and the Moor had conquer'd.

*King.* It is our will she should be so attended.

'Bear hence these prisoners.' Garcia, which is he,  
Of whose mute valour you relate such wonders?

*[Prisoners led off.]*

*Gar.* Osmyn, who led the Moorish horse; but he,  
Great Sir, at her request, attends on Zara.

*King.* He is your prisoner; as you please dispose him.

*Gar.* I would oblige him, but he shuns my kindness;  
And with a haughty mien, and stern civility,  
Dumbly declines all offers. If he speak,  
'Tis scarce above a word; as he were born  
Alone to do, and did disdain to talk;  
At least to talk where he must not command.

*King.* Such fullness, and in a man so brave,  
Must have some other cause than his captivity.  
Did Zara, then, request he might attend her?

*Gar.* My lord, she did.

*King.* That, join'd with his behaviour,  
Begets a doubt. I'd have 'em watch'd; perhaps  
Her chains hang heavier on him than his own.

*Enter Alonzo, Zara and Osmyn bound, conducted by Perez  
and a guard, and attended by Selim and several mutes  
and cunuchs in a train.*

*King.* What welcome, and what honours, beauteous  
Zara,

A king and conqueror can give, are yours.  
A conqueror indeed, where you are won;  
Who with such lustre strike admiring eyes,  
That had our pomp been with your presence grac'd,  
Th' expecting crowd had been deceiv'd; and seen  
The monarch enter not triumphant, but  
In pleasing triumph led; your beauty's slave.

*Zar.* If I on any terms could condescend  
To like captivity, or think those honours,  
Which conquerors in courtesy bestow,  
Of equal value with unborrow'd rule  
And native right to arbitrary sway,  
I might be pleas'd, when I behold this train  
With usual homage wait: but when I feel  
These bonds, I look with loathing on myself,  
And scorn vile slavery, though doubly hid  
Beneath mock-praises, and dissembled state.

*King.* Those bonds! 'Twas my command you should  
How durst you, Perez, disobey?

*[be free.  
Perez.]*



*Perez.* Great Sir,

Your order was she should not wait your triumph ;  
But at some distance follow, thus attended.

*King.* 'Tis false ; 'twas more ; I bid she should be free ;  
If not in words, I bid it by my eyes.

Her eyes did more than bid——Free her and hers  
With speed——yet stay——my hands alone can make  
Fit restitution here——Thus I release you,  
And by releasing you, enslave myself.

*Zar.* Such favours, so conferr'd, tho' when unsought ;  
Deserve acknowledgment from noble minds.

Such thanks, as one hating to be oblig'd——  
Yet hating more ingratitude, can pay,  
I offer.

*King.* Born to excel, and to command !  
As by transcendent beauty to attract  
All eyes, so by preheminance of soul  
To rule all hearts.

Garcia, what's he, who with contracted brow,  
[*Beholding Osmyn as they unbind him.*

And sullen port, glooms downwards with his eyes ;  
At once regardless of his chains, or liberty ?

*Gar.* That, Sir, is he of whom I spoke ; that's Osmyn.

*King.* He answers well the character you gave him.  
Whence comes it, valiant Osmyn, that a man

So great in arms, as thou art said to be,  
So hardly can endure captivity,  
The common chance of war ?

*Osm.* Because captivity  
Has robb'd me of a dear and just revenge.

*King.* I understand not that.

*Osm.* I would not have you.

*Zar.* That gallant Moor in battle lost a friend,  
Whom more than life he lov'd ; and the regret,  
Of not revenging on his foes that loss,  
Has caus'd this melancholy and despair.

*King.* She does excuse him ; 'tis as I suspected.

[*To Gonf.*

*Gon.* That friend may be herself ; seem not to heed  
His arrogant reply : she looks concern'd.

*King.* I'll have enquiry made ; perhaps his friend  
Yet lives, and is a prisoner. His name ?

*Zar.* Heli.

*King.* Garcia, that search shall be your care ;  
 It shall be mine to pay devotion here ;  
 At this fair shrine to lay my laurels down,  
 And raise love's altar on the spoils of war.  
 Conquest and triumph, now, are mine no more ;  
 Nor will I victory in camps adore :

' For, ling'ring there, in long suspense she stands,  
 ' Shifting the prize in unresolving hands ;  
 ' Unus'd to wait, I broke through her delay,  
 ' Fix'd her by force, and snatch'd the doubtful day.  
 ' Now late I find that war is but her sport ;  
 ' In love the goddess keeps her awful court ;'  
 Fickle in fields, unsteadily she flies,  
 But rules with settled sway in Zara's eyes. [Exit.

THE END of the FIRST ACT.

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A C T II.

SCENE, *representing the isle of a temple.*

' Garcia, Heli, Perez.

' GARCIA.

' **T**HIS way, we're told, Osmyn was seen to walk ;  
 ' Choosing this lonely mansion of the dead,  
 ' To mourn, brave Heli, thy mistaken fate.

' *Heli.* Let heav'n with thunder to the centre strike me ;  
 ' If to arise in very deed from death,  
 ' And to revisit with my long-clos'd eyes  
 ' This living light, cou'd to my soul or sense  
 ' Afford a thought, or shew a glimpse of joy,  
 ' In least proportion to the vast delight  
 ' I feel, to hear of Osmyn's name ; to hear  
 ' That Osmyn lives, and I again shall see him.

' *Gar.* I've heard, with admiration, of your friendship.

' *Per.* Yonder, my lord, behold the noble Moor.

' *Hel.* Where ? Where ?

' *Gar.* I saw him not, nor any like him——

' *Per.* I saw him when I spoke, thwarting my view,  
 ' And striding with distemper'd haste ; his eyes  
 ' Seem'd flame, and flash'd upon me with a glance ;

' Then

' Then forward shot their fires which he pursu'd,  
 ' As to some object frightful, yet not fear'd.  
 ' *Gar.* Let's haste to follow him, and know the cause.  
 ' *Hel.* My lord, let me intreat you to forbear :  
 ' Leave me alone, to find and cure the cause.  
 ' I know his melancholy, and such starts  
 ' Are usual to his temper. It might raise him  
 ' To act some violence upon himself,  
 ' So to be caught in an unguarded hour,  
 ' And when his soul gives all her passions way,  
 ' Secure and loose in friendly solitude.  
 ' I know his noble heart would burst with shame,  
 ' To be surpriz'd by strangers in its frailty.  
 ' *Gar.* Go, generous Heli, and relieve your friend.  
 ' Far be it from me, officiously to pry  
 ' Or press upon the privacies of others.

[*Exit Heli.*]

' Perez, the king expects from our return  
 ' To have his jealousy confirm'd, or clear'd,  
 ' Of that appearing love which Zara bears  
 ' To Osmyn ; but some other opportunity  
 ' Must make that plain.  
 ' *Per.* To me 'twas long since plain,  
 ' And ev'ry look from him and her confirms it.  
 ' *Gar.* If so, unhappiness attends their love,  
 ' And I could pity 'em. I hear some coming.  
 ' The friends, perhaps, are met ; let us avoid 'em.

[*Exeunt.*]

*Enter Almeria and Leonora.*

*Alm.* It was a fancy'd noise, for all is hush'd.

*Leon.* It bore the accent of a human voice.

*Alm.* It was thy fear, or else some transient wind  
 Whistling through hollows of this vaulted ile.  
 We'll listen——

*Leon.* Hark !

*Alm.* No, all is hush'd, and still as death—'tis dread-  
 How reverend is the face of this tall pile, [ful !  
 Whose antient pillars rear their marble heads,  
 To bear aloft its arch'd and pond'rous roof,  
 By its own weight made stedfast and immoveable,  
 Looking tranquility. It strikes an awe  
 And terror on my aking sight ; the tombs

And

And monumental caves of death look cold,  
 And shoot a chilness to my trembling heart.  
 Give me thy hand, and let me hear thy voice;  
 Nay, quickly speak to me, and let me hear  
 Thy voice—my own affrights me with its echoes.

*Leon.* Let us return; the horror of this place  
 And silence will increase your melancholy.

*Alm.* It may my fears, but cannot add to that.  
 No, I will on; shew me Anselmo's tomb,  
 Lead me o'er bones and skulls, and mould'ring earth  
 Of human bodies; for I'll mix with them,  
 Or wind me in the shroud of some pale corse  
 Yet green in earth, rather than be the bride  
 Of Garcia's more detested bed: that thought  
 Exerts my spirit; and my present fears  
 Are lost in dread of greater ill. Then shew me,  
 Lead me, for I am bolder grown: lead on  
 Where I may kneel, and pay my vows again  
 To him, to Heav'n, and my Alphonso's soul.

*Leon.* I go; but Heav'n can tell with what regret.  
 [Exit.]

*Enter Heli.*

I wander through this maze of monuments,  
 Yet cannot find him—Hark! sure 'tis the voice  
 Of one complaining—There it sounds—I'll follow it.  
 [Exit.]

*The SCENE opening discovers a place of tombs: one monument fronting the view greater than the rest.*

*Enter Almeria and Leonora.*

*Leon.* Behold the sacred vault, within whose womb  
 The poor remains of good Anselmo rest,  
 Yet fresh and unconsum'd by time or worms.  
 What do I see? Oh, heav'n! either my eyes  
 Are false, or still the marble door remains  
 Unclos'd; the iron grates, that lead to death  
 Beneath, are still wide stretch'd upon their hinge,  
 And staring on us with unfolded leaves.

*Alm.* Sure 'tis the friendly yawn of death for me;  
 And that dumb mouth, significant in show,  
 Invites me to the bed, where I alone  
 Shall rest; shews me the grave, where nature, weary  
 And

And long oppress'd with woes and bending cares,  
 May lay the burden down, and sink in slumbers  
 Of peace eternal. ' Death, grim death, will fold  
 ' Me in his leaden arms, and press me close  
 ' To his cold clayie breast : ' my father then  
 Will cease his tyranny ; and Garcia too  
 Will fly my pale deformity with loathing.  
 My soul, enlarg'd from its vile bonds, will mount,  
 And range the starry orbs, and milky ways,  
 ' Of that refulgent world, where I shall swim  
 ' In liquid light, and float on seas of bliss  
 To my Alphonso's soul. Oh, joy too great!  
 Oh, extasy of thought ! Help me, Anselmo ;  
 Help me, Alphonso ; take me, reach thy hand ;  
 To thee, to thee I call, to thee, Alphonso :  
 Oh, Alphonso !

*Osmyn ascending from the tomb.*

*Osm.* Who calls that wretched thing that was Alphonso ?

*Alm.* Angels, and all the host of Heav'n, support me !

*Osm.* Whence is that voice, whose shrillness, from the grave,

And growing to his father's shroud, roots up Alphonso ?

*Alm.* Mercy ! Providence ! Oh, speak,  
 Speak to it quickly, quickly ; speak to me,  
 Comfort me, help me, hold me, hide me, hide me,  
 Leonora, in thy bosom, from the light,  
 And from my eyes.

*Osm.* Amazement and illusion !  
 Rivet and nail me where I stand, ye pow'rs,

*[Coming forward.]*

That motionless I may be still deceiv'd.  
 Let me not stir, nor breathe, lest I dissolve  
 That tender, lovely form of painted air,  
 So like Almeria. Ha ! it sinks, it falls ;  
 I'll catch it ere it goes, and grasp her shade.  
 'Tis life ! 'tis warm ! 'tis she, 'tis she herself !  
 Nor dead, nor shade, but breathing and alive !  
 It is Almeria, 'tis, it is my wife !

*Enter Heli.*

*Leon.* Alas ! she stirs not yet, nor lifts her eyes ;

He

He too is fainting—Help me, help me, stranger,  
Whoe'er thou art, and lend thy hand to raise  
These bodies.

*Hel.* Ha! 'tis he! and with—Almeria!  
Oh, miracle of happiness! Oh, joy  
Unhop'd for! does Almeria live!

*Ofm.* Where is she?  
Let me behold and touch her, and be sure  
'Tis she; 'shew me her face, and let me feel  
' Her lips with mine—'Tis she, I'm not deceiv'd;  
' I taste her breath, I warm'd her and am warm'd.'  
Look up, Almeria, bless me with thy eyes;  
Look on thy love, thy lover, and thy husband.

*Alm.* I've sworn I'll not wed Garcia: why d'ye force  
Is this a father? [me..

*Ofm.* Look on thy Alphonso.  
Thy father is not here, my love, nor Garcia:  
Nor am I what I seem, but thy Alphonso.  
' Wilt thou not know me?' Hast thou then forgot me?  
' Hast thou thy eyes, yet canst not see Alphonso?'  
Am I so alter'd, or art thou so chang'd,  
That seeing my disguise, thou seest not me?

*Alm.* It is, it is Alphonso; 'tis his face,  
His voice, I know him now, I know him all.  
' Oh, take me to thy arms, and bear me hence,  
' Back to the bottom of the boundless deep,  
' To seas beneath, where thou so long hast dwelt.  
Oh! how hast thou returned? How hast thou charm'd  
The wildness of the waves and rocks to this?  
That thus relenting they have giv'n thee back  
To earth, to light and life, to love and me.

*Ofm.* Oh, I'll not ask, nor answer how, or why  
We both have backward trod the paths of fate,  
To meet again in life; to know I have thee,  
Is knowing more than any circumstance,  
Or means, by which I have thee—  
To fold thee thus, to press thy balmy lips,  
And gaze upon thy eyes, is so much joy,  
I have not leisure to reflect, or know,  
Or trifle time in thinking.

*Alm.* Stay a while—  
Let me look on thee yet a little more.

' *Ofm.*

‘ *Ofm.* What wouldst thou? thou dost put me from thee.

‘ *Alm.* Yes.

‘ *Ofm.* And why? What dost thou mean? Why dost thou gaze so?

‘ *Alm.* I know not; ’tis to see thy face, I think—

It is too much! too much to bear and live!

To see thee thus again is such profusion

Of joy, of bliss—I cannot bear—I must

Be mad—I cannot be transported thus.

*Ofm.* Thou excellence, thou joy, thou heav’n of love!

*Alm.* Where hast thou been? and how art thou alive?

‘ How is all this? All-pow’rful Heav’n, what are we?

‘ Oh, my strain’d heart—let me again behold thee,

‘ For I weep to see thee—Art thou not paler?

‘ Much, much; how thou art chang’d!

‘ *Ofm.* Not in my love.

‘ *Alm.* No, no, thy griefs, I know, have done this to thee.

‘ Thou hast wept much, Alphonso; and, I fear,

‘ Too much, too tenderly, lamented me.

‘ *Ofm.* Wrong not my love, to say too tenderly.

‘ No more, my life; talk not of tears or grief;

‘ Affliction is no more, now thou art found.

‘ Why dost thou weep, and hold thee from my arms,

‘ My arms which ake to fold thee fast, and grow

‘ To thee with twining? Come, come to my heart.

‘ *Alm.* I will, for I should never look enough.

‘ They would have marry’d me; but I had sworn

‘ To Heav’n and thee, and sooner would have dy’d—

‘ *Ofm.* Perfection of all faithfulness and love!

‘ *Alm.* Indeed I wou’d—Nay, I wou’d tell thee all,

‘ If I could speak; how I have mourn’d and pray’d:

‘ For I have pray’d to thee, as to a saint;

‘ And thou hast heard my pray’r; for thou art come

‘ To my distress, to my despair, which Heav’n

‘ Could only, by restoring thee, have cur’d.

‘ *Ofm.* Grant me but life, good Heav’n, but length of days,

‘ To pay some part, some little of this debt,

‘ This countless sum of tenderness and love,

‘ For which I stand engag’d to this all excellence:

‘ Then

' Then bear me in a whirlwind to my fate,  
 ' Snatch me from life, and cut me short unwarn'd :  
 ' Then, then 'twill be enough—I shall be old,  
 ' I shall have liv'd beyond all æras then  
 ' Of yet unmeasur'd time ; when I have made  
 ' This exquisite, this most amazing goodness,  
 ' Some recompence of love and matchless truth.  
 ' *Alm.* 'Tis more than recompence to see thy face :  
 ' If Heav'n is greater joy it is no happiness,  
 ' For 'tis not to be borne—What shall I say ?  
 ' I have a thousand things to know and ask,  
 ' And speak—That thou art here beyond all hope,  
 ' All thought ; that all at once thou art before me,  
 ' And with such suddenness hast hit my sight,  
 ' Is such surprise, such mystery, such extasy,  
 ' It hurries all my soul, and stuns my sense.'  
 Sure from thy father's tomb thou didst arise ?

*Osm.* I did ; and thou, my love, didst call me ; thou.

*Alm.* True ; but how can'st thou there ? Wert thou alone ?

*Osm.* I was, and lying on my father's lead,  
 When broken echoes of a distant voice  
 Disturb'd the sacred silence of the vault,  
 In murmurs round my head. I rose and listen'd,  
 And thought I heard thy spirit call Alphonso ;  
 I thought I saw thee too ; but, Oh, I thought not  
 That I indeed should be so blest to see thee——

*Alm.* But still, how can'st thou thither ? How thus ?

——Ha !

What's he, who, like thyself, is started here  
 Ere seen ?

*Osm.* Where ? Ha ! what do I see, Antonio !  
 I'm fortunate indeed——my friend too, safe !

*Heli.* Most happily, in finding you thus bless'd.

*Alm.* More miracles ! Antonio too, escap'd !

*Osm.* And twice escap'd ; both from the rage of seas  
 And war : for in the fight I saw him fall.

*Heli.* But fell unhurt, a pris'ner as yourself,  
 And as yourself made free ; hither I came,  
 Impatiently to seek you, where I knew  
 Your grief would lead you to lament Anselmo.

' *Osm.*



‘ *Omf.* There are no wonders, or else all is wonder.  
 ‘ *Heli.* I saw you on the ground, and rais’d you up,  
 ‘ When with astonishment I saw Almeria.

‘ *Osm.* I saw her too, and therefore saw not thee.  
 ‘ *Alm.* Nor I ; nor could I, for my eyes were yours.  
*Osm.* What means the bounty of all-gracious Heav’n,  
 That persevering still, with open hand,  
 It scatters good, as in a waste of mercy !  
 Where will this end ? But Heav’n is infinite  
 In all, and can continue to bestow,  
 When scanty number shall be spent in telling.

*Leon.* Or I’m deceiv’d, or I beheld the glimpse  
 Of two in shining habits cross the isle ;  
 Who by their pointing, seem to mark this place.

*Alm.* Sure I have dreamt, if we must part so soon.  
*Osm.* I wish at least our parting were a dream,  
 Or we could sleep ’till we again were met.

*Heli.* Zara with Selim, Sir, I saw and know ’em :  
 You must be quick, for love will lend her wings.

*Alm.* What love ? Who is she ? Why are you alarm’d ?

*Osm.* She’s the reverse of thee ; she’s my unhappiness.  
 Harbour no thought that may disturb thy peace ;  
 ‘ But gently take thyself away, lest she  
 ‘ Should come, and see the straining of my eyes  
 ‘ To follow thee.’

Retire, my love, I’ll think how we may meet  
 To part no more ; my friend will tell thee all ;  
 How I escap’d, how I am here, and thus ;  
 How I’m not call’d Alphonso now, but Olimyn ;  
 And he Heli. All, all he will unfold,  
 Ere next we meet——

*Alm.* Sure we shall meet again——

*Osm.* We shall ; we part not but to meet again.  
 Gladness and warmth of ever-kindling love  
 Dwell with thee, and revive thy heart in absence.

[*Exeunt Alm. Leon. and Heli.*]

Yet I behold her—yet—and now no more.  
 Turn your lights inward, eyes, and view my thoughts,  
 So shall you still behold her—‘ ’twill not be.  
 ‘ Oh, impotence of sight ! Mechanic sense !  
 ‘ Which to exterior objects ow’st thy faculty,  
 ‘ Not seeing of election, but necessity.

' Thus do our eyes, as do all common mirrors,  
 ' Successively reflect succeeding images :  
 ' Not what they would, but must ; a star, or toad ;  
 ' Just as the hand of chance administers.  
 ' Not so the mind, whose undetermin'd view  
 ' Revolves, and to the present adds the past :  
 ' Essay'ing farther to futurity ;  
 ' But that in vain. I have Almeria here  
 ' At once, as I before have seen her often—

*Enter Zara and Selim.*

*Zar.* See where he stands, folded and fix'd to earth,  
 Stiff'ning in thought, a statue among statues.  
 Why, cruel Osmy'n, dost thou fly me thus ?  
 ' Is it well done ? Is this then the return  
 ' For fame, for honour, and for empire lost ?  
 ' But what is loss of honour, fame, and empire ?  
 ' Is this the recompence reserv'd for love ?  
 ' Why, dost thou leave my eyes, and fly my arms,  
 ' To find this place of horror and obscurity ?  
 Am I more loathsome to thee than the grave,  
 That thou dost seek to shield thee there, and shun  
 My love ? But to the grave I'll follow thee—  
 He looks not, minds not, hears not ; barb'rous man !  
 Am I neglected thus ? Am I despis'd ?  
 Not hear'd ! Ungrateful Osmy'n !

*Osmy'n.* Ha, 'tis Zara !

*Zar.* Yes, traitor ; Zara, lost, abandon'd Zara,  
 Is a regardless suppliant, now, to Osmy'n.  
 The slave, the wretch that she redeem'd from death,  
 Disdains to listen now, or look on Zara.

*Osmy'n.* Far be the guilt of such reproaches from me ;  
 Lost in myself, and blinded by my thoughts,  
 I saw you not till now.

*Zar.* Now then you see me—  
 But with such dumb and thankless eyes you look,  
 Better I was unseen, than seen thus coldly.

*Osmy'n.* What would you from a wretch who came to  
 mourn,  
 And only for his sorrows chose this solitude ?  
 Look round ; joy is not here, nor cheerfulness.  
 You have pursu'd misfortune to its dwelling,  
 Yet look for gaiety and gladness there.

*Zar.*

*Zar.* Inhuman! Why, why dost thou rack me thus?  
And, with perverseness, from the purpose, answer?  
What is't to me, this house of misery?

What joy do I require? If thou dost mourn,  
I come to mourn with thee, to share thy griefs,  
And give thee, for 'em, in exchange, my love.

*Os'm.* Oh, that's the greatest grief—I am so poor,  
I have not wherewithal to give again.

*Zar.* Thou hast a heart, tho' 'tis a savage one;  
Give it me as it is; I ask no more  
For all I've done, and all I have endur'd:  
For saving thee, when I beheld thee first,  
Driv'n by the wind upon my country's coast,  
Pale and expiring, drench'd in briny waves,  
Thou and thy friend, till my compassion found thee;  
Compassion! scarce will't own that name, so soon,  
So quickly, was it love; for thou wert godlike  
E'en then. Kneeling on earth, I loos'd my hair,  
And with it dry'd thy wat'ry cheeks, then chaf'd  
Thy temples, till reviving blood arose,  
And, like the morn, vermilion'd o'er thy face.  
Oh, Heav'n! how did my heart rejoice and ake,  
When I beheld the day-break of thy eyes,  
And felt the balm of thy respiring lips!

*Os'm.* Oh, call not to my mind what you have done;  
' It sets a debt of that account before me,  
' Which shews me poor and bankrupt even in hopes.

*Zar.* ' The faithful Selim, and my women, know  
' The danger which I tempted to conceal you.  
' You know how I abus'd the cred'lous king;  
' What arts I us'd to make you pass on him,  
' When he receiv'd you as the prince of Fez;  
' And as my kinsman, honour'd and advanc'd you.'

Oh! why do I relate what I have done?  
What did I not? Was't not for you this war  
Commenc'd? Not knowing who you were, nor why  
You hated Manuel, I urg'd my husband  
To this invasion; where he late was lost,  
Where all is lost, and I am made a slave.

\* *Osm.* You pierce my soul—I own it all—But while  
The power is wanting to repay such benefits,  
'Tis treble anguish to a generous heart.

*Zara.* Repay me with thy heart—What, dost thou start?  
Make no reply! Is this thy gratitude?

Look on me now, from empire fall'n to slavery;  
Think on my suff'rings first, then look on me;  
Think on the cause of all, then view thyself:  
Reflect on Osmyn, and then look on Zara,  
The fall'n, the lost, and now the captive Zara,  
And now abandon'd——Say, what then is Osmyn?

*Osm.* A fatal wretch—A huge, stupendous ruin,  
That tumbling on its prop, crush'd all beneath,  
And bore contiguous palaces to earth.

*Zara.* Yet thus, thus fall'n, thus levell'd with the vilest,  
If I have gain'd thy love, 'tis glorious ruin;  
Ruin! 'tis still to reign, and to be more  
A queen; for what are riches, empire, power,  
But larger means to gratify the will?  
The steps on which we tread, to rise and reach  
Our wish; and that obtain'd, down with the scaffolding  
Of sceptres, crowns, and thrones; they've serv'd their  
And are, like lumber, to be left and scorn'd. [end,

*Osm.* Why was I made the instrument to throw  
In bonds the frame of this exalted mind?

*Zara.* We may be free; the conqueror is mine;  
In chains unseen I hold him by the heart,  
And can unwind and strain him as I please.  
Give me thy love, I'll give thee liberty.

*Osm.* In vain you offer, and in vain require  
What neither can bestow. Set free yourself,  
And leave a slave the wretch that would be so.

*Zara.* Thou canst not mean so poorly as thou talk'st.

*Osm.* Alas! you know me not.

*Zara.* Not who thou art:

But what this last ingratitude declares,  
This groveling baseness—Thou say'st true, I know  
Thee not; for what thou art yet wants a name:

\* The lines printed in Italics are not in the original, but are now given to the reader as delivered in the representation at Drury-lane Theatre.

By something so unworthy and so vile,  
That to have lov'd thee makes me yet more lost,  
Than all the malice of my other fate.

Traitor, monster, cold perfidious slave;  
A slave not daring to be free; nor dares  
To love above him; for 'tis dangerous.

'Tis that, I know; for thou dost look, with eyes  
Sparkling desire, and trembling to possess.  
I know my charms have reach'd thy very soul,  
And thrill'd thee through with darting fires; but thou  
Dost fear so much, thou dar'st not wish.' The king!  
There, there's the dreadful sound, the king's thy rival!

*Sel.* Madam, the king is here, and entering now.

*Zara.* As I could wish; by Heav'n I'll be reveng'd.

*Enter the King, Perez, and attendants.*

*King.* Why does the fairest of her kind withdraw  
Her shining from the day, to gild this scene  
Of death and night? Ha! what disorder's this?  
Somewhat I heard of king and rival mention'd.  
What's he that dares be rival to the king,  
Or lift his eyes to like where I adore? [Slave.

*Zara.* There, he, your prisoner, and that was my

*King.* How? better than my hopes! Does she accuse  
him? [Aside.

*Zara.* Am I become so low by my captivity,  
And do your arms so lessen what they conquer,  
That Zara must be made the sport of slaves?  
And shall the wretch, whom yester sun beheld  
Waiting my nod, the creature of my pow'r,  
Presume to-day to plead audacious love,  
And build bold hopes on my dejected fate?

*King.* Better for him to tempt the rage of Heav'n,  
And wrench the bolt red-hissing from the hand  
Of him that thunders, than but to think that insolence.  
'Tis daring for a god.' Hence to the wheel  
With that Ixion, who aspires to hold  
Divinity embrac'd; to whips and prisons  
Drag him with speed, and rid me of his face.

[Guards seize Osmyn, and exeunt.]

*Zara.* Compassion led me to bemoan his state,  
Whose former fate had merited much more:

And, through my hopes in you, I undertook  
He should be set at large; thence sprung his insolence,  
And what was charity, he constru'd love.

*King.* Enough; his punishment be what you please.  
But let me lead you from this place of sorrow,  
To one where young delights attend, 'and joys,  
' Yet new, unborn, and blooming in the bud,  
' Which wait to be full-blown at your approach,  
' And spread, like roses, to the morning sun :'  
Where ev'ry hour shall roll in circling joys,  
And love shall wing the tedious-wasting day.  
Life, without love, is load; and time stands still :  
What we refuse to him, to death we give;  
And then, then only, when we love, we live. [*Exeunt.*]

END of the SECOND ACT.

A C T III.

SCENE, a prison.

*OSMYN, with a paper.*

**B**UT now, and I was clos'd within the tomb  
That holds my father's ashes; and but now,  
Where he was pris'ner, I am too imprison'd.  
Sure 'tis the hand of Heav'n that leads me thus,  
And for some purpose points out these remembrances.  
In a dark corner of my cell I found  
This paper; what it is this light will shew.

“ If my Alphonso”——Ha! [*Reading.*]  
“ If my Alphonso live, restore him, Heav'n;  
“ Give me more weight, crush my declining years  
“ With bolts, with chains, imprisonment and want;  
“ But bless my son, visit not him for me.

It is his hand; this was his pray'r——yet more:

“ Let ev'ry hair, which sorrow by the roots [*Reading.*]  
“ Tears from my hoary and devoted head,  
“ Be doubled in thy mercies to my son:  
“ Not for myself, but him, hear me, all-gracious——

'Tis wanting what should follow—Heav'n shou'd follow,  
 But 'tis torn off—Why shou'd that word alone  
 Be torn from this petition? 'Twas to Heav'n,  
 But Heav'n was deaf, Heav'n heard him not; but thus,  
 Thus as the name of Heav'n from this is torn,  
 So did it tear the ears of mercy from  
 His voice, shutting the gates of pray'r against him.  
 If piety be thus debarr'd access  
 On high, and of good men the very best  
 Is singled out to bleed, and bear the scourge,  
 What is reward? Or what is punishment?  
 But who shall dare to tax eternal justice!  
 Yet I may think—I may, I must; for thought  
 Precedes the will to think, and error lives  
 Ere reason can be born. ' Reason, the power  
 ' To guess at right and wrong, the twinkling lamp  
 ' Of wand'ring life, that winks and wakes by turns,  
 ' Fooling the follower, betwixt shade and shining.'  
 What noise! Who's there? My friend? How cam'st  
 thou hither?

*Enter Heli.*

*Heli.* The time's too precious to be spent in telling.  
 The captain, influenc'd by Almeria's power,  
 Gave order to the guards for my admittance.

*Osm.* How does Almeria? But I know she is  
 As I am. Tell me, may I hope to see her?

*Heli.* You may. Anon, at midnight, when the king  
 Is gone to rest, and Garcia is retir'd,  
 ' (Who takes the privilege to visit late,  
 ' Presuming on a bridegroom's right)' she'll come.

*Osm.* She'll come; 'tis what I wish, yet what I fear.  
 She'll come; but whither, and to whom? Oh, Heav'n!  
 To a vile prison, and a captive wretch;  
 To one, whom, had she never known, she had  
 Been happy. Why, why was that heav'nly creature  
 Abandon'd o'er to love what Heav'n forsakes?  
 Why does she follow, with unwearied steps,  
 One, who has tir'd misfortune with pursuing?  
 ' One driven about the world, like blasted leaves  
 ' And chaff, the sport of adverse winds; 'till late,

32 THE MOURNING BRIDE.

' At length imprison'd in some cleft of rock,  
' On earth it rests, and rots to silent dust.'

*Heli.* Have hopes, and hear the voice of better fate.  
I've learn'd there are disorders ripe for mutiny  
Among the troops, who thought to share the plunder,  
Which Manuel to his own use and avarice  
Converts. This news has reach'd Valentia's frontiers,  
Where many of your subjects, long oppress'd  
With tyranny, and grievous impositions,  
Are risen in arms, and call for chiefs to head  
And lead them to regain their rights and liberty.

*Os.* By Heav'n thou'ast rous'd me from my lethargy  
The spirit which was deaf to my own wrongs,  
And the loud cries of my dead father's blood,  
' Deaf to revenge—nay, which refus'd to hear  
' The piercing sighs and murmurs of my love  
' Yet unenjoy'd; what not Almeria could  
' Revive or raise,' my people's voice has waken'd.

*Heli.* Our posture of affairs, and scanty time  
My lord, require you should compose yourself.

*Os.* Oh, my Antonio! I am all on fire;  
My soul is up in arms, ready to charge  
And bear amidst the foe with conqu'ring troops.  
I hear 'em call to lead 'em on to liberty,  
To victory; their shouts and clamours rend  
My ears, and reach the Heav'ns. Where is the king?  
Where is Alphonso? Ha! where? where indeed?  
Oh, I could tear and burst the strings of life,  
To break these chains. Off, off, ye stains of royalty;  
Off, slavery. Oh, curse! that I alone  
Can beat and flutter in my cage, when I  
Would soar and stoop at victory beneath.

*Heli.* Abate this ardour, Sir, or we are lost.  
Zara, the cause of your restraint, may be  
The means of liberty restor'd. That gain'd,  
Occasion will not fail to point out ways  
For your escape. Mean time, I've thought already  
With speed and safety to convey myself,  
Where not far off some malcontents hold council  
Nightly, who hate this tyrant; some, who love



Anselmo's memory, and will, for certain,  
When they shall know you live, assist your cause.

*Osm.* My friend and counsellor, as thou think'st fit,  
So do. I will, with patience, wait my fortune.

*Heli.* When Zara comes, abate of your aversion.

*Osm.* I hate her not, nor can dissemble love :  
But as I may I'll do. ' I have a paper  
' Which I would shew thee, friend, but that the sight  
' Would hold thee here, and clog thy expedition.  
' Within I found it, by my father's hand  
' 'Twas writ ; a pray'r for me, wherein appears  
' Paternal love prevailing o'er his sorrows ;  
' Such sanctity, such tenderness, so mix'd  
' With grief, as would draw tears from inhumanity.  
' *Heli.* The care of Providence sure left it there,  
' To arm your mind with hope. Such piety  
' Was never heard in vain. Heav'n has in store  
' For you those blessings it withheld from him.  
' In that assurance live ; which time, I hope,  
' And our next meeting will confirm.

*Osm.* Farewel,  
My friend ; the good thou dost deserve, attend thee.

[Exit Heli.]

I've been to blame, and question'd with impiety  
The care of Heav'n. Not so my father bore  
More anxious grief. This should have better taught me ;  
' This lesson, in some hour of inspiration  
' By him set down, when his pure thoughts were borne,  
' Like fumes of sacred incense o'er the clouds,  
' And wafted thence, on angel's wings, thro' ways  
' Of light, to the bright source of all. For there  
' He in the book of prescience saw this day ;  
' And waking to the world and mortal sense,  
' Left this example of his resignation,  
This his last legacy to me : which, here,  
I'll treasure as more worth than diadems,  
Or all extended rule of regal pow'r.

*Enter Zara, veil'd.*

*Osm.* What brightness breaks upon me thus through  
And promises a day to this dark dwelling ? [shades,  
Is it my love ?—

*Zara.*

Zara. Oh, that thy heart had taught [*Lifting her v.*  
Thy tongue that saying!

*Osm.* Zara! I am betray'd by my surprize.

Zara. What, does my face displease thee?

That, having seen it, thou dost turn thy eyes  
Away, as from deformity and horror?

If so, this sable curtain shall again

Be drawn, and I will stand before thee, seeing,  
And unseen. Is it my love? Ask again

That question; speak again in that soft voice;  
And look again with wishes in thy eyes.

Oh, no! thou canst not, for thou seest me now,  
As she whose savage breast hath been the cause

Of these thy wrongs; as she whose barb'rous rage  
Has loaded thee with chains and galling irons.

' Well dost thou scorn me, and upbraid my falseness;

' Could one who lov'd, thus torture whom she lov'd?

' No, no, it must be hatred, dire revenge,

' And detestation, that could use thee thus.

' So dost thou think; then do but tell me so;

' Tell me, and thou shalt see how I'll revenge

' Thee on this false one, how I'll stab and tear

' This heart of flint, 'till it shall bleed; and thou

' Shalt weep for mine, forgetting thy own miseries.'

*Osm.* You wrong me, beauteous Zara, to believe  
I bear my fortunes with so low a mind,

' As still to meditate revenge on all

' Whom chance, or fate, working by secret causes,

' Has made, per-force, subservient to the end|

' The heav'nly pow'rs allot me;' no, not you,

But destiny and inauspicious stars

Have cast me down to this low being. Or

Granting you had, from you I have deserv'd it.

Zara. Canst thou forgive me then? wilt thou believe  
So kindly of my fault, to call it madness?

Oh, give that madness yet a milder name,

And call it passion! then, be still more kind,

And call that passion love.

*Osm.* Give it a name,

Or being, as you please, such I will think it.

Zara. Oh, thou dost wound me more with this thy good-  
Than

[ness,  
Than

Than e'er thou couldst with bitterest reproaches;  
Thy anger could not pierce thus to my heart.

*Os.* Yet I could wish——

*Zara.* Hasten me to know it; what?

*Os.* That at this time I had not been this thing.

*Zara.* What thing?

*Os.* This slave.

*Zara.* Oh, Heav'n my fears interpret

This thy silence; somewhat of high concern,  
Long fashioning within thy labouring mind,  
And now just ripe for birth, my rage has ruin'd.  
Have I done this? Tell me, am I so curs'd?

*Os.* Time may have still one fated hour to come,  
Which, wing'd with liberty, might overtake  
Occasion past.

*Zara.* Swift as occasion, I

Myself will fly; and earlier than the morn,  
Wake thee to freedom. 'Now 'tis late; and yet  
Some news few minutes past, arriv'd, which seem'd  
To shake the temper of the king—Who knows  
What racking cares disease a monarch's bed?  
Or love, that late at night still lights his lamp,  
And strikes his rays thro' dusk and folded lids,  
Forbidding rest, may stretch his eyes awake,  
And force their balls abroad at this dead hour.  
I'll try.

*Os.* I have not merited this grace;  
Nor, should my secret purpose take effect,  
Can I repay, as you require, such benefits.

*Zara.* Thou canst not owe me more, nor have I more  
To give, than I've already lost. But now,  
So does the form of our engagements rest,  
Thou hast the wrong till I redeem thee hence;  
That done, I leave thy justice to return  
My love. Adieu.

[*Exit.*]

*Os.* This woman has a soul  
Of godlike mould, intrepid and commanding,  
And challenges, in spite of me, my best  
Esteem; 'to this, she's fair, few more can boast  
'Of personal charms, or with less vanity  
'Might hope to captivate the hearts of kings;'

But

But she has passions which outstrip the wind,  
 And tear her virtues up, as tempests root  
 The sea. I fear, when she shall know the truth,  
 Some swift and dire event of her blind rage  
 Will make all fatal. But behold, she comes  
 For whom I fear, to shield me from my fears,  
 The cause and comfort of my boding heart.

*Enter Almeria.*

My life, my health, my liberty, my all!  
 How shall I welcome thee to this sad place?  
 How speak to thee the words of joy and transport?  
 How run into thy arms, withheld by fetters;  
 Or take thee into mine, while I'm thus manacled  
 And pinion'd like a thief or murderer?  
 Shall I not hurt or bruise thy tender body,  
 And stain thy bosom with the rust of these  
 Rude irons? Must I meet thee thus, Almeria?

*Alm.* Thus, thus; we parted, thus to meet again.  
 Thou told'st me thou would'st think how we might meet  
 To part no more——Now we will part no more;  
 For these thy chains, or death, shall join us ever.

*Osm.* Hard means to ratify thy word!—Oh, cruelty!  
 ' That ever I should think beholding thee  
 ' A torture!—Yet, such is the bleeding anguish  
 ' Of my heart, to see thy sufferings——Oh, Heav'n!  
 ' That I could almost turn my eyes away,  
 ' Or wish thee from my sight.

*Alm.* Oh, say not so!  
 ' Tho' 'tis because thou lov'st me. Do not say,  
 ' On any terms, that thou dost wish me from thee.  
 ' No, no, 'tis better thus, that we together  
 ' Feed on each other's heart, devour our woes  
 ' With mutual appetite; and mingling in  
 ' One cup the common stream of both our eyes,  
 ' Drink bitter draughts, with never-flaking thirst;  
 ' Thus better, than for any cause to part.  
 ' What dost thou think? Look not so tenderly  
 ' Upon me——speak, and take me in thy arms——  
 ' Thou canst not; thy poor arms are bound, and strive  
 ' In vain with thy remorseless chains, which gnaw  
 ' And eat into thy flesh, fest'ring thy limbs  
 ' With rankling rust.'

*Osm.*

*Ofm.* Oh! O——

*Alm.* Give me that sigh.

Why dost thou heave, and stifle in thy griefs?  
Thy heart will burst, thy eyes look red, and start;  
Give thy foul way, and tell me thy dark thought.

*Ofm.* For this world's rule, I would not wound thy breast  
With such a dagger as then stuck my heart.

*Alm.* Why? why? To know it, cannot wound me more  
Than knowing thou hast felt it. Tell it me,  
—Thou giv'st me pain with too much tenderness.

*Ofm.* And thy excessive love distracts my sense.  
Oh, wouldst thou be less killing, soft, or kind,  
Grief could not double thus his darts against me.

*Alm.* Thou dost me wrong, and grief too robs my  
If there he shoot not every other shaft; [heart,  
Thy second self shou'd feel each other wound,  
And woe should be in equal portions dealt.  
I am thy wife—

*Ofm.* Oh, thou hast search'd too deep:  
There, there I bleed; there pull the cruel cords,  
That strain my cracking nerves; engines and wheels,  
That piece-meal grind, are beds of down and balm  
To that soul-racking thought.

*Alm.* Then I am curs'd  
Indeed, if that be so; if I'm thy torment,  
Kill me, then, kill me, dash me with thy chains,  
Tread on me: 'What, am I the bosom-snake  
' That sucks thy warm life-blood, and gnaws thy heart;  
' Oh, that thy words had force to break those bonds,  
' As they have strength to tear this heart in sunder;  
' So shou'dst thou be at large from all oppression.'  
Am I, am I of all thy woes the worst?

*Ofm.* My all of bliss, my everlasting life,  
Soul of my soul, and end of all my wishes,  
Why dost thou thus unman me with thy words,  
' And melt me down to mingle with thy weepings?  
' Why dost thou ask? Why dost thou talk thus piercingly?'  
Thy sorrows have disturb'd thy peace of mind,  
And thou dost speak of miseries impossible.

*Alm.* Didst not thou say that racks and wheels were  
balm  
And beds of ease, to thinking me thy wife?

*Osm.* No, no; nor shou'd the subtlest pains that hell  
 Or hell-born malice can invent, extort  
 A wish or thought from me to have thee other.  
 But thou wilt know what harrows up my heart:  
 Thou art my wife——nay, thou art yet my bride——  
 The sacred union of connubial love  
 Yet unaccomplish'd: 'his mysterious rites  
 'Delay'd; nor has our hymeneal torch  
 'Yet lighted up his last most grateful sacrifice;  
 'But dash'd with rain from eyes, and swal'd with sighs,  
 'Burns dim, and glimmers with expiring light.'  
 Is this dark cell a temple for that god?  
 Or this vile earth an altar for such offerings?  
 This den for slaves, this dungeon damp'd with woes;  
 'Is this our marriage bed? are these our joys?'  
 Is this to call thee mine? Oh, hold, my heart!  
 To call thee mine? Yes; thus even thus to call  
 Thee mine, were comfort, joy, extremest extasy.  
 But, Oh, thou art not mine, not e'en in misery;  
 And 'tis deny'd to me to be so blest'd,  
 As to be wretched with thee.

*Alm.* No; not that

Th' extremest malice of our fate can hinder:  
 That still is left us, and on that we'll feed,  
 As on the leavings of calamity.  
 There we will feast and smile on past distress,  
 And hug, in scorn of it, or mutual ruin.

*Osm.* Oh, thou dost talk, my love, as one resolv'd,  
 Because not knowing danger. But look forward;  
 Think of to-morrow, when thou shalt be torn  
 From these weak, struggling, unextended arms:  
 Think how my heart will heave, and eyes will strain,  
 To grasp and reach what is deny'd my hands:  
 'Think how the blood will start, and tears will gush,  
 'To follow thee, my separating soul.'  
 Think how I am, when thou shalt wed with Garcia!  
 Then will I smear these walls with blood, disfigure  
 And dash my face, and rive my clotted hair,  
 Break on this flinty floor my throbbing breast,  
 And grovel with gash'd hands to scratch a grave,  
 'Stripping my nails to tear this pavement up,'  
 And bury me alive.

*Alm.* Heart-breaking horror!

*Ofm.* Then Garcia shall lie panting on thy bosom,  
Luxurious, revelling amidst thy charms;  
'And thou per-force must yield, and aid his transport.'  
Hell! Hell! have I not cause to rage and rave?  
What are all racks, and wheels, and whips to this?  
'Are they not soothing softness, sinking ease,  
'And wafting air to this?' Oh, my Almeria!  
What do the damn'd endure, but to despair,  
But knowing Heav'n, to know it lost for ever?

*Alm.* Oh, I am struck; thy words are bolts of ice,  
Which shot into my breast, now melt and chill me.  
'I chatter, shake, and faint with thrilling fears.  
'No, hold me not—Oh, let us not support,  
'But sink each other, deeper yet, down, down,  
'Where levell'd low, no more we'll lift our eyes,  
'But prone, and dumb, rot the firm face of earth  
'With rivers of incessant scalding rain.'

*Enter Zara, Perez, Selim.*

*Zar.* Somewhat of weight to me requires his freedom?  
Dare you dispute the king's command? Behold  
The royal signet.

*Per.* I obey; yet beg  
Your majesty one moment to defer  
Your ent'ring, 'till the princess is return'd  
From visiting the noble prisoner.

*Zar.* Ha!  
What say'st thou?

*Ofm.* We are lost! undone! discover'd!  
'Retire, my life, with speed—Alas, we're seen:'  
Speak of compassion, let her hear you speak  
Of interceding for me with the king;  
Saying something quickly to conceal our loves,  
If possible—

*Alm.*—I cannot speak.

*Ofm.* Let me  
Conduct you forth, as not perceiving her,  
But till she's gone; then bless me thus again.

*Zar.* Trembling and weeping as he leads her forth!  
Confusion in his face, and grief in hers!  
'Tis plain I've been abus'd—'Death and destruction!  
'How shall I search into this mystery?'

' The bluest blast of pestilential air  
 ' Strike, damp, deaden her charms, and kill his eyes ;'  
 Perdition catch 'em both, and ruin part 'em.

*Osmin.* This charity to one unknown, and thus

[*Aloud to Almeria as she goes out.*

Distress'd, Heav'n will repay ; all thanks are poor.

[*Exit Almeria.*

*Zar.* Damn'd, damn'd dissembler ! Yet I will be calm,  
 Choak in my rage, and know the utmost depth  
 Of this deceiver——You seem much surpriz'd.

*Osmin.* At your return so soon and unexpected !

*Zara.* And so unwish'd, unwanted too it seems.  
 Confusion ! Yet I will contain myself.

You're grown a favourite since last we parted ;  
 Perhaps I'm saucy and intruding——

*Osmin.*—— Madam !

*Zara.* I did not know the princess' favourite.  
 Your pardon, Sir——mistake me not ; you think  
 I'm angry ; you're deceiv'd. I came to set  
 You free ; but shall return much better pleas'd,  
 To find you have an interest superior.

*Osmin.* You do not come to mock my miseries ?

*Zar.* I do.

*Osmin.* I could at this time spare your mirth.

*Zar.* I know thou couldst ; but I'm not often pleas'd.  
 And will indulge it now. What miseries ?  
 Who would not be thus happily confin'd,  
 To be the care of weeping majesty ;  
 To have contending queens, at dead of night,  
 Forsake their down, to wake with wat'ry eyes,  
 And watch like tapers o'er your hours of rest ?  
 Oh, curse ! I cannot hold——

*Osmin.* Come, 'tis too much.

*Zar.* Villain !

*Osmin.* How, Madam !

*Zar.* Thou shalt die.

*Osmin.* I thank you.

*Zar.* Thou ly'st, for now I know for whom thou'dst

*Osmin.* Then you may know for whom I die.

*Zar.* Hell ! Hell !

Yet I'll be calm——Dark and unknown betrayer !

But



But now the dawn begins, and the slow hand  
Of Fate is stretch'd to draw the veil, and leave  
Thee bare, the naked mark of public view.

*Osm.* You may be still deceiv'd, 'tis in my pow'r—  
*Chain'd as I am, to fly from all my wrongs*  
*And free myself, at once, from misery,*  
*And you of me.*

*Zar.* Ha! say'st thou—but I'll prevent it—  
Who waits there? As you will answer it, look this  
slave [To the guard.

Attempt no means to make himself away.  
I've been deceiv'd. The public safety now  
Requires he shou'd be more confin'd, and none,  
No, not the princess, suffer'd or to see  
Or speak with him. I'll quit you to the king.  
Vile and ingrate! too late thou shalt repent  
The base injustice thou hast done my love:  
Yes, thou shalt know, spite of thy past distress,  
And all those ills which thou so long hast mourn'd;  
Heav'n has no rage like love to hatred turn'd,  
Nor hell a fury like a woman scorn'd. } *Exeunt.*

END of the THIRD ACT.

## ACT IV.

SCENE, *a room of state.*

Zara, Selim.

ZARA.

**T**HOU hast already rack'd me with thy stay;  
Therefore require me not to ask thee twice:  
Reply at once to all. What is concluded?

*Sel.* Your accusation highly has incens'd  
The king, and were alone enough to urge  
The fate of Osmyr; but to that, fresh news  
Has since arriv'd, of more revolted troops.  
'Tis certain Heli too is fled, and with him  
(Which breeds amazement and distraction) some  
Who bore high offices of weight and trust,  
Both in the state and army. This confirms  
The king in full belief of all you told him

Concerning Osmyn, and his correspondence  
 With them who first began the mutiny.  
 Wherefore a warrant for his death is sign'd ;  
 And order given for public execution.

*Zar.* Ha! haste thee! fly, prevent his fate and mine ;  
 Find out the king, tell him I have of weigh  
 More than his crown t' impart ere Osmyn die.

*Sel.* It needs not, for the king will straight be here,  
 And as to your revenge, not his own int'rest,  
 Pretend to sacrifice the life of Osmyn.

*Zar.* What shall I say? Invent, contrive, advise  
 Somewhat to blind the king, and save his life,  
 In whom I live. ' Spite of my rage and pride,  
 ' I am a woman, and a lover still.  
 ' Oh! 'tis more grief but to suppose his death,  
 ' Than still to meet the rigour of his scorn.  
 ' From my despair my anger had its source ;  
 ' When he is dead I must despair for ever.  
 ' For ever! that's despair——it was distrust  
 ' Before; distrust will ever be in love,  
 ' And anger in distrust; both short-liv'd pains.  
 ' But in despair, and ever-during death,  
 ' No term, no bound, but infinite of woe.  
 ' Oh, torment, but to think! what then to bear?  
 ' Not to be borne'——Devise the means to shun it,  
 Quick; or, by Heav'n, this dagger drinks thy blood.

*Sel.* My life is yours, nor wish I to preserve it,  
 But to serve you. I have already thought.

*Zar.* Forgive my rage; I know thy love and truth.  
 But say, what's to be done? or when, or how,  
 Shall I prevent or stop th' approaching danger?

*Sel.* You must still seem most resolute and fix'd  
 On Osmyn's death; too quick a change of mercy  
 Might breed suspicion of the cause. Advise  
 That execution may be done in private.

*Zar.* On what pretence?

*Sel.* Your own request's enough.  
 However, for a colour, tell him, you  
 Have cause to fear his guards may be corrupted,  
 And some of them bought off to Osmyn's interest,  
 Who at the place of execution will  
 Attempt to force his way for an escape;

The state of things will countenance all suspicions.  
Then offer to the king to have him strangled  
In secret by your mutes; and get an order,  
That none but mutes may have admittance to him.  
I can no more, the king is here. Obtain  
This grant, and I'll acquaint you with the rest.

*Enter King, Gonzalez, and Perez.*

*King.* Bear to the dungeon those rebellious slaves,  
'Th' ignoble curs, that yelp to fill the cry,  
'And spend their mouths in barking tyranny.'  
But for their leaders, Sancho and Ramirez,  
Let 'em be led away to present death.  
*Perez,* see it perform'd.

*Gonz.* Might I presume,  
Their execution better were deferr'd,  
'Till Osmyn die. Mean time we may learn more  
Of this conspiracy.

*King.* Then be it so.  
Stay, soldier; they shall suffer with the Moor.  
Are none return'd of those that follow'd Heli?

*Gonz.* None, Sir. Some papers have been since discover'd

In Roderigo's house, who fled with him,  
Which seem to intimate, as if Alphonso  
Were still alive, and arming in Valentia:  
Which wears indeed this colour of a truth,  
They who are fled have that way bent their course.  
Of the same nature divers notes have been  
Dispers'd t'amuse the people; whereupon  
Some, ready of belief, have rais'd this rumour:  
That being sav'd upon the coast of Afric,  
He there disclos'd himself to Albucacim,  
And by a secret compact made with him,  
Open'd and urg'd the way to this invasion;  
While he himself, returning to Valentia  
In private, undertook to raise this tumult.

*Zar.* Ha! hear'st thou that? Is Osmyn then Alphonso?  
'Oh, heav'n! a thousand things occur at once  
'To my remembrance now, that make it plain.'  
Oh, certain death for him, as sure despair  
For me, if it be known——If not, what hope  
Have I? Yet 'twere the lowest baseness now,

To yield him up—No, I will conceal him,  
And try the force of yet more obligations.

*Gonf.* 'Tis not impossible. Yet it may be  
That some impostor has usurp'd his name.  
Your beauteous captive Zara can inform,  
If such an one, so 'scaping, was receiv'd,  
At any time in Albucacim's court.

*King.* Pardon, fair excellence, this long neglect:  
An unforeseen, unwelcome hour of business,  
Has thrust between us and our while of love;  
But wearing now apace with ebbing sand,  
Will quickly waste and give again the day.

*Zar.* You're too secure: the danger is more imminent  
Than your high courage suffers you to see;  
While Osmyn lives, you are not safe.

*King.* His doom  
Is pass'd, if you revoke it not, he dies.

*Zar.* 'Tis well. By what I heard upon your entrance,  
I find I can unfold what yet concerns  
You more. One, who did call himself Alphonso,  
Was cast upon my coast, as is reported,  
And oft had private conference with the king;  
To what effect I knew not then: but he,  
Alphonso, secretly departed, just  
About the time our arms embark'd for Spain.  
What I know more is, that a triple league  
Of strictest friendship was profess'd between  
Alphonso, Heli, and the traitor Osmyn.

*King.* Public report is ratify'd in this.

*Zar.* And Osmyn's death requir'd of strong necessity.

*King.* Give order strait, that all the pris'ners die.

*Zar.* Forbear a moment, somewhat more I have  
Worthy your private ear, and this your minister.

*King.* Let all, except Gonfalez, leave the room.

[Exit Perez, &c.]

*Zar.* I am your captive, and you've us'd me nobly;  
And in return of that, tho' otherwise  
Your enemy, ' I have discover'd Osmyn  
' His private practice and conspiracy  
' Against your state: and fully to discharge  
' Myself of what I've undertaken, now'  
I think it fit to tell you, that your guards

Are tainted ; some among 'em have resolv'd  
To rescue Osmyn at the place of death.

*King.* Is treason then so near us as our guards ?

*Zar.* Most certain ; tho' my knowledge is not yet  
So ripe, to point at the particular men.

*King.* What's to be done ?

*Zar.* That too I will advise.

I have remaining in my train some mutes,  
A present once from the sultana queen,  
In the grand signior's court. These from their infancy  
Are practic'd in the trade of death ; and shall  
(As their custom is) in private strangle  
Osmyn.

*Gonf.* My lord, the queen advises well.

*King.* What off'ring, or what recompence remains  
In me, that can be worthy so great services ?  
To cast beneath your feet the crown you've sav'd,  
Tho' on the head that wears it, were too little.

*Zar.* Of that hereafter : but, mean time, 'tis fit  
You give strict charge, that none may be admitted  
To see the pris'ner, but such mutes as I  
Shall send.

*King.* Who waits there ?

*Enter Perez.*

*King.* On your life, take heed  
That only Zara's mutes, or such who bring  
Her warrant, have admittance to the Moor.

*Zar.* They, and no other, not the princess' self.

*Per.* Your majesty shall be obey'd.

*King.* Retire.

[*Exit Perez.*]

*Gonf.* That interdiction so particular  
Pronounc'd with vehemence against the princess,  
Shou'd have more meaning than appears barefac'd.  
This king is blinded by his love, and heeds  
It not. [*Aside.*]—Your majesty sure might have spar'd  
The last restraint : you hardly can suspect  
The princess is confed'rate with the Moor.

*Zar.* I've heard her charity did once extend  
So far, to visit him at his request.

*Gonf.* Ha !

*King.* How ! She visit Osmyn ! What, my daughter ?

*Sel.* Madam, take heed ; or you have ruin'd all.

*Zar.*

*Zar.* And after did solicit you on his  
Behalf.—

*King.* Never. You have been misinform'd.

*Zar.* Indeed! 'Then 'twas a whisper spread by some  
Who wish'd it so; a common art in courts.  
I will retire and instantly prepare  
Instruction for my ministers of death.

[*Exit Zara and Selima.*]

*Gonf.* There's somewhat yet of mystery in this;  
Her words and actions are obscure and double,  
Sometimes concur, and sometimes disagree:  
I like it not.

[*Aside.*]

*King.* What dost thou think, Gonfalez?  
Are we not much indebted to this fair one?

*Gonf.* I am a little slow of credit, Sir,  
In the sincerity of woman's actions.  
Methinks this lady's hatred to the Moor  
Disquiets her too much; which makes it seem  
As if she'd rather that she did not hate him.  
I wish her mutes are meant to be employ'd  
As she pretends—I doubt it now—Your guards  
Corrupted! How? By whom? Who told her so?  
I'th' evening Osmyrn was to die; at midnight  
She begg'd the royal signet to release him;  
I'th' morning he must die again; ere noon  
Her mutes alone must strangle him, or he'll  
Escape. This put together suits not well.

*King.* Yet that there's truth in what she has discover'd  
Is manifest from every circumstance.  
This tumult, and the lords who fled with Heli,  
Are confirmation;—that Alphonso lives,  
Agrees expressly too with her report.

*Gonf.* I grant it, Sir; and doubt not, but in rage  
Of jealousy, she has discover'd what  
She now repents. It may be I'm deceiv'd.  
But why that needless caution of the princess?  
What if she had seen Osmyrn? Tho' 'twere strange;  
But if she had, what was't to her? Unless  
She fear'd her stronger charms might cause the Moor's  
Affection to revolt.

*King.* I thank thee, friend.

There's

There's reason in thy doubt, and I am warn'd.—  
But think'st thou that my daughter saw this Moor?

*Gonf.* If Osmyn be, as Zara has related,  
Alphonso's friend, 'tis not impossible  
But she might wish, on his account, to see him.

*King.* Say'st thou? By Heav'n, thou hast rous'd a  
thought,  
That like a sudden earthquake shakes my frame.  
Confusion! then my daughter's an accomplice,  
And plots in private with this hellish Moor.

*Gonf.* That were too hard a thought—but see, she  
'Twere not amiss to question her a little, [comes—  
And try, howe'er, if I've divin'd aright.  
If what I fear be true, she'll be concern'd  
For Osmyn's death, as he's Alphonso's friend:  
Urge that, to try if she'll solicit for him.

*Enter Almeria and Leonora.*

*King.* Your coming has prevented me, Almeria;  
I had determined to have sent for you.  
Let your attendant be dismiss'd; I have [*Leonora retires.*  
To talk with you. Come near; why dost thou shake?  
What mean those swoll'n and red-fleck'd eyes, that look  
As they had wept in blood, and worn the night  
In waking anguish? Why this on the day  
Which was design'd to celebrate thy nuptials;  
But that the beams of light are to be stain'd  
With reeking gore, from traitors on the rack?  
Wherefore I have deferr'd the marriage-rites;  
Nor shall the guilty horrors of this day  
Prophane that jubilee.

*Alm.* All days to me  
Henceforth are equal: this, the day of death,  
To-morrow, and the next, and each that follows  
Will undistinguish'd roll, and but prolong  
One hated line of more extended woe.

*King.* Whence is thy grief? Give me to know the  
And look thou answer me with truth; for know [cause;  
I am not unacquainted with thy falshood.  
Why art thou mute? Base and degen'rate maid!

*Gonf.* Dear Madam, speak, or you'll incense the King.

*Alm.* What is't to speak? Or wherefore should I speak?  
What mean these tears but grief unutterable?

*King.*

*King.* They are the dumb confessions of thy guilty mind ;

They mean thy guilt: and say thou wert confed'rate  
With damn'd conspirators to take my life.

Oh, impious parri. ide ! Now canst thou speak ?

*Alm.* O earth, behold, I kneel upon thy bosom,  
And bend my flowing eyes to stream upon  
Thy face, impløring thee that thou wilt yield ;  
Open thy bowels of compassion, take  
Into thy womb the last and most forlorn  
Of all thy race. Hear me, thou common parent  
——I have no parent else——be thou a mother,  
And step between me and the curse of him  
Who was—who was, but is no more a father ;  
But brands my innocence with horrid crimes ;  
And for the tender names of child and daughter,  
Now calls me murderer and parricide.

*King.* Rise, I command thee—and if thou would  
Acquit thyself of those detested names,  
Swear thou hast never seen that foreign dog,  
Now doom'd to die, that most accursed Osmyrn.

*Alm.* Never, but as with innocence I might,  
And free of all bad purposes. So Heaven's  
My witness.

*King.* Vile equivocating wretch !  
With innocence ! Oh, patience ! hear—she owns it !  
Confesses it ! By Heav'n, I'll have him rack'd,  
Torn, mangled, flay'd, impal'd—all pains and tortures  
That wit of man and dire revenge can think,  
Shall he, accumulated, underbear.

*Alm.* Oh, I am lost. ——There fate begins to wound.

*King.* Hear me, then ; if thou canst reply ; know,  
traitrefs,

I'm not to learn that curs'd Alphonso lives ;  
Nor am I ignorant what Osmyrn is ——

*Alm.* Then all is ended, and we both must die.  
Since thou'rt reveal'd, alone thou shalt not die.  
And yet alone would I have dy'd, Heav'n knows,  
Repeated deaths, rather than have reveal'd thee.

• Yes, all my father's wounding wrath, tho' each  
• Reproach cuts deeper than the keenest sword,  
• And cleaves my heart, I wou'd have borne it all,

• Nay



• Nay all the pains that are prepar'd for thee ;  
 • To the remorseless rack I wou'd have giv'n  
 • This weak and tender flesh, to have been bruis'd  
 • And torn, rather than have reveal'd thy being.'

*King.* Hell, hell! Do I hear this, and yet endure!  
 What, dar'st thou to my face avow thy guilt?  
 Hence, ere I curse—fly my just rage with speed;  
 Lest I forget us both, and spurn thee from me.

*Alm.* And yet a father! Think, I am your child!  
 Turn not your eyes away—look on me kneeling;  
 Now curse me if you can, now spurn me off.  
 Did ever father curse his kneeling child?  
 Never; for always blessings crown that posture.

• Nature inclines, and half way meets that duty,  
 • Stooping to raise from earth the filial reverence;  
 • For bended knees returning folding arms,  
 • With pray'rs, and blessings, and paternal love.'

Oh, hear me then, thus crawling on the earth——

*King.* Be thou advis'd, and let me go, while yet  
 The light impression thou hast made remains.

*Alm.* No, never will I rise, nor lose this hold,  
 'Till you are mov'd, and grant that he may live.

*King.* Ha! Who may live? Take heed! No more of  
 For on my soul he dies, tho' thou and I, [that;  
 And all shou'd follow to partake his doom.

Away, off, let me go——Call her attendants.

[*Leonora and women return.*]

*Alm.* Drag me; harrow the earth with my bare bosom;  
 I will not go 'till you have spar'd my husband.

*King.* Ha! 'What say'st thou?' Husband! 'Husband!  
 damnation!

• What husband! Which? Who?

*Alm.* He, he is my husband.

*King.* 'Poison and daggers!' Who?

*Alm.* Oh——

[*Faints.*]

• *Gonf.* Help, support her.'

*Alm.* Let me go, let me fall, sink deep—I'll dig,  
 I'll dig a grave, and tear up death; 'I will;

• I'll scrape, 'till I collect his rotten bones,  
 • And cloath their nakedness with my own flesh;'

Yes, I will strip off life, and we will change:

I will be death; then, tho' you kill my husband,  
He shall be mine still, and for ever mine.

*King.* What husband? Whom dost thou mean?

*Gonf.* She raves!

*Alm.* 'Oh, that I did.' Osmyyn, he is my husband.

*King.* Osmyyn!

*Alm.* Not Osmyyn, but Alphonso, is my dear  
And wedded husband——Heav'n, and air, and seas,  
Ye winds and waves, I call ye all to witness.

*King.* Wilder than winds or waves thyself dost rave.  
Shou'd I hear more, I too shou'd catch thy madness.

'Yet somewhat she must mean of dire import,

'Which I'll not hear, 'till I am more at peace.'

Watch her returning sense, and bring me word;

And look that she attempt not on her life. [*Exit King.*]

*Alm.* Oh, stay, yet stay; hear me, I am not mad.  
I wou'd to Heav'n I were——He's gone.

*Gonf.* Have comfort.

*Alm.* Curs'd be that tongue that bids me be of com-  
fort;

Curs'd my own tongue, that could not move his pity;  
Curs'd these weak hands, that could not hold him here;  
For he is gone to doom Alphonso's death.

*Gonf.* Your too excessive grief works on your fancy,  
And deludes your sense. Alphonso, if living,  
Is far from hence, beyond your father's pow'r.

*Alm.* Hence, thou detested, ill-tim'd flatterer;  
Source of my woes: thou and thy race be curs'd;  
But doubly thou, who couldst alone have policy  
And fraud to find the fatal secret out,  
And know that Osmyyn was Alphonso.

*Gonf.* Ha!

*Alm.* Why dost thou start? What dost thou see or  
Was it the doleful bell, tolling for death? [*hear?*]

Or dying groans from my Alphonso's breast?

See, see, look yonder! where a grizzled, pale,  
And ghastly herd glares by, all smear'd with blood,  
Gasping as it would speak; and after, see;

Behold a damp, dead hand has dropp'd a dagger:

I'll catch it—Haak! a voice cries murder! ah!

My father's voice! follow it sounds, and calls

Me from the tomb—I'll follow it; for there  
I shall again behold my dear Alphonso.

[*Exeunt Almeria and Leonora.*]

*Gonf.* She's greatly griev'd; nor am I less surpriz'd.  
Of myn, Alphonso! No; she over rates  
My policy; I ne'er suspected it:  
Nor now had known it, but from her mistake.  
Her husband too! Ha! Where is Garcia then?  
And where the crown that shou'd descend on him,  
To grace the line of my posterity?  
Hold, let me think——if I should tell the king——  
Things come to this extremity: his daughter  
Wedded already——what if he should yield?  
Knowing no remedy for what is past,  
And urg'd by nature pleading for his child,  
With which he seems to be already shaken.  
And tho' I know he hates beyond the grave  
Anselmo's race; yet if——that If concludes me.  
To doubt, when I may be assur'd, is folly.  
But how prevent the captive queen, who means  
To set him free? Ay, now 'tis plain. O well  
Invented tale! He was Alphonso's friend.  
'This subtle woman will amuse the king.  
If I delay——'twill do——or better so.  
One to my wish. Alonzo, thou art welcome.

*Enter Alonzo.*

*Alon.* The king expects your lordship.

*Gonf.* 'Tis no matter.

I'm not i'the way at present, good Alonzo.

*Alon.* If't please your lordship, I'll return, and say  
I have not seen you.

*Gonf.* Do, my best Alonzo.

Yet stay, I would——but go; anon will serve——

Yet I have that requires thy speedy help.

I think thou wou'dst not stop to do me service.

*Alon.* I am your creature.

*Gonf.* Say thou art my friend.

I've seen thy sword do noble execution.

*Alon.* All that it can your lordship shall command.

*Gonf.* Thanks; and I take thee at thy word. Thou'ft  
Amongst the followers of the captive queen, [seen,  
Dumb men, who make their meaning known by signs.

*Alon.* I have, my lord.

*Gon.* Couldst thou procure, with speed  
And privacy, the wearing garb of one  
Of those, tho' purchas'd by his death, I'd give  
Thee such reward, as shou'd exceed thy wish. [Ship?

*Alon.* Conclude it done. Where shall I wait your lord-

*Gon.* At my apartment. Use thy utmost diligence;  
And say I've not been seen--Haste, good Alonzo. [*Ex. Al.*  
So, this can hardly fail. Alphonso slain,  
The greatest obstacle is then remov'd.  
Almeria widow'd, yet again may wed;  
And I yet fix the crown on Garcia's head. [*Exit.*

END of the FOURTH ACT.

A C T V.

SCENE, *a room of state.*

*Enter King, Perez, and Alonzo.*

KING.

**N**OT to be found! In an ill hour he's absent.  
None, say you? none! What, not the fav'rite  
eunuch?

Nor she herself, nor any of her mutes,  
Have yet requir'd admittance?

*Per.* None, my lord.

*King.* Is Osmyn so dispos'd as I commanded?

*Per.* Fast bound in double chains, and at full length  
He lies supine on earth; with as much ease  
She might remove the centre of this earth,  
As loose the rivets of his bonds.

*King.* 'Tis well.

[*A mute appears, and seeing the king, retires.*

Ha! stop, and seize that mute; Alonzo, follow him.  
Ent'ring he met my eyes, and started back,  
Frighted, and fumbling one hand in his bosom,  
As to conceal th' importance of his errand.

[*Alonzo follows him, and returns with a paper.*

*Alon.* A bloody proof of obstinate fidelity!

*King.* What dost thou mean?

*Alon.*

*Alon.* Soon as I seiz'd the man,  
He snatch'd from out his bosom this—and strove  
With rash and greedy haste, at once, to cram  
The morsel down his throat. I caught his arm,  
And hardly wrench'd his hand to wring it from him ;  
Which done, he drew a poignard from his side,  
And on the instant plung'd it in his breast.

*King.* Remove the body thence, ere Zara see it.

*Alon.* I'll be so bold to borrow his attire ;

'Twill quit me of my promise to Gonzalez. [*Aside. Exit.*]

*Per.* Whate'er it is, the king's complexion turns.'

*King.* How's this ? My mortal foe beneath my roof !

[*Having read the letter.*]

Oh, give me patience, all ye powers ! No, rather  
Give me new rage, implacable revenge,  
And trebled fury—Ha ! who's there ?

*Per.* My lord.

[*pry*]

*King.* Hence, slave ! how dar'st thou bide, to watch and  
Into how poor a thing a king descends,  
How like thyself, when passion treads him down ?  
Ha ! stir not, on thy life ; for thou wert fix'd,  
And planted here, to see me gorge this bait,  
And lash against the hook—By Heav'n, you're all  
Rank traitors ; thou art with the rest combin'd ;  
Thou knew'st that Osmyn was Alphonso ; knew'st  
My daughter privately with him conferr'd ;  
And wert the spy and pander to their meeting.

*Per.* By all that's holy, I'm amaz'd—

*King.* Thou ly'st.

Thou art accomplice too with Zara ; here  
Where she sets down—*Still will I set thee free*—[*Reading.*]  
That somewhere is repeated—*I have power*  
*O'er them that are thy guards*—Mark that, thou traitor.

*Per.* It was your majesty's command I should  
Obey her order.—

*King.* [*Reading.*].——*And still will I set*  
*Thee free, Alphonso*—Hell ! curs'd, curs'd Alphonso !  
False and perfidious Zara ! Strumpet daughter !  
Away, begone, thou feeble boy, fond love ;  
All nature, softness, pity and compassion,  
This hour I throw ye off, and entertain  
Fell hate within my breast, revenge and gall.

By Heav'n, I'll meet, and counterwork this treachery.  
Hark thee, villain, traitor—answer me, slave.

*Per.* My service has not merited those titles.

*King.* Dar'st thou reply? 'Take that'—thy service!  
thine! ' [Strikes him.]

What's thy whole life, thy soul, thy all, to my  
One moment's ease? Hear my command; and look  
That thou obey, or horror on thy head:  
Drench me thy dagger in Alphonso's heart.  
Why dost thou start? Resolve, or—

*Per.* Sir, I will.

*King.* 'Tis well—that when she comes to set him free,  
His teeth may grin, and mock at her remorse.

[Perez going.]

—Stay thee—I've farther thought—I'll add to this,

And give her eyes yet greater disappointment:

When thou hast ended him, bring me his robe;

And let the cell where she'll expect to see him

Be darken'd, so as to amuse the sight.

I'll be conducted thither—mark me well—

'There with his turbant, and his robe array'd,

And laid along, as he now lies, supine,

I shall convict her, to her face, of falshood.

When for Alphonso's she shall take my hand,

And breathe her sighs upon my lips for his;

Sudden I'll start and dash her with her guilt.

But see, she comes. I'll shun th' encounter; thou

Follow me, and give heed to my direction. [Exeunt.]

*Enter Zara and Selim.*

*Za.* 'The mute not yet return'd!' ha! 'twas the king,

The king that parted hence! frowning he went;

'His eyes like meteors roll'd, then darted down

'Their red and angry beams; as if his sight

'Would, like the raging dog-star, scorch the earth,

'And kindle ruin in its course:' Dost think

He saw me?

*Sel.* Yes: but then, as if he thought

His eyes had err'd, he hastily recall'd

Th' imperfect look, and sternly turn'd away.

*Za.* Shun me when seen! I fear thou hast undone me.

'Thy shallow artifice begets suspicion,

'And, like a cobweb veil, but thinly shades

' The

' The face of thy design ; alone disguising  
 ' What should have ne'er been seen ; imperfect mischief !  
 ' Thou, like the adder, venomous and deaf,  
 ' Hast stung the traveller, and after hear'st  
 ' Not his pursuing voice ; e'en when thou think'st  
 ' To hide, the rustling leaves and bended grass  
 ' Confess and point the path which thou hast crept.  
 ' Oh, fate of fools ! officious in contriving ;  
 ' In executing, puzzled, lame, and lost.'

*Sel.* Avert, it Heav'n, that you should ever suffer  
 For my defect ; or that the means which I  
 Devis'd to serve, should ruin your design.  
 Prescience is Heav'n's alone, not giv'n to man.  
 If I have fail'd, in what, as being man,  
 I needs must fail ; impute not as a crime  
 My nature's want, but punish nature in me ;  
 I plead not for a pardon, and to live,  
 But to be punish'd and forgiven. Here, strike ;  
 I bare my breast to meet your just revenge.

*Za.* I have not leisure now to take so poor  
 A forfeit as thy life ; somewhat of high  
 And more important fate requires my thought.  
 ' When I've concluded on myself, if I  
 ' Think fit, I'll leave thee my command to die.'  
 Regard me well ; and dare not to reply  
 To what I give in charge ; for I'm resolv'd.  
 Give order that the two remaining mutes  
 Attend me instantly, with each a bowl  
 Of such ingredients mix'd, as will with speed  
 Benumb the living faculties, and give  
 Most easy and inevitable death.  
 Yes, Osmyrn, yes ; be Osmyrn or Alphonso,  
 I'll give thee freedom, if thou dar'st be free :  
 Such liberty as I embrace myself,  
 Thou shalt partake. Since fates no more afford ;  
 I can but die with thee, to keep my word. [Exeunt.

SCENE opening, *shows the prison.*

*Enter Gofalez disguised like a mute, with a dagger.*

*Gon.* Nor centinel, nor guard ! the doors unbarr'd !  
 And all as still, as at the noon of night !  
 Sure death already has been busy here.

There

There lies my way ; that door too is unlock'd. [*Looking in.*  
 Ha ! sure he sleeps— all's dark within, save what  
 A lamp, that feebly lifts a sickly flame,  
 By fits reveals—his face seems turn'd, to favour  
 'Th' attempt : I'll steal and do it unperceiv'd.  
 What noise ! somebody coming ? 'st, Alonzo ?  
 Nobody. Sure he'll wait without—— I would  
 'Twere done—I'll crawl, and sting him to the heart,  
 Then cast my skin, and leave it there to answer it. [*Goes in.*

*Enter Garcia and Alonzo.*

*Gar.* Where, where, Alonzo, where's my father ?  
 where

The king ? Confusion ! all is on the rout !  
 All's lost, all ruin'd by surprize and treachery.  
 Where, where is he ! Why dost thou mislead me ?

*Alon.* My lord, he enter'd but a moment since,  
 And could not pass me unperceiv'd—What hoa !  
 My lord, my lord ! What hoa ! my lord Gonzalez !

*Enter Gonzalez bloody.*

*Gon.* Perdition choak your clamours——whence this  
 Garcia ! [*rudeness ?*

*Gar.* Perdition, slavery, and death,  
 Are ent'ring now our doors. Where is the king ?  
 What means this blood ; and why this face of horror ?

*Gon.* No matter—give me first to know the cause  
 Of these your rash, and ill-tim'd exclamations.

*Gar.* 'The eastern gate is to the foe betray'd,  
 Who, but for heaps of slain that choak the passage,  
 Had enter'd long ere now, and borne down all  
 Before 'em, to the palace walls. Unless  
 The king in person animate our men,  
 Granada's lost ; and to confirm this fear,  
 The traitor Perez, and the captive Moor,  
 Are through a postern fled, and join the foe.

*Gon.* Would all were false as that ; for whom you call  
 The Moor is dead. That Osmyrn was Alphonso ;  
 In whose heart's blood this poignard yet is warm.

*Gar.* Impossible ; for Osmyrn was, while flying,  
 Pronounc'd aloud by Perez for Alphonso.

*Gon.* Enter that chamber, and convince your eyes,  
 How much report has wrong'd your easy faith.

[*Garcia goes in.*

*Alon.*



*Alon.* My lord, for certain truth Perez is fled;  
And has declar'd, the cause of his revolt  
Was to revenge a blow the king had giv'n him.

*Gar.* [*Returning.*] Ruin and horror! Oh, heart-wounding fight!

*Gon.* What says my son? What ruin? Ha! what horror?

*Gar.* Blasted my eyes, and speechless be my tongue,  
Rather than or to see, or to relate  
This deed—Oh, dire mistake! Oh, fatal blow!  
The king——

*Gon.* *Alon.* The king!

*Gar.* Dead, welt'ring, drown'd in blood.  
See, see, attir'd like Osmyrn, where he lies. [*They look in.*  
Oh, whence, or how, or wherefore was this done?  
But what imports the manner or the cause?  
Nothing remains to do, or to require,  
But that we all should turn our swords against  
Ourselves, and expiate with our own, his blood.

*Gon.* Oh, wretch! Oh, curs'd and rash deluded fool!  
On me, on me turn your avenging swords.  
I, who have spilt my royal master's blood,  
Should make atonement by a death as horrid,  
And fall beneath the hand of my own son.

*Gar.* Ha! what! atone this murder with a greater!  
The horror of that thought has damp'd my rage.  
' The earth already groans to bear this deed;  
' Oppress her not, nor think to stain her face  
' With more unnatural blood. Murder my father!  
' Better with this to rip up my own bowels,  
' And bathe it to the hilt, in far less damnable  
' Self-murder.'

*Gon.* Oh, my son! from the blind dotage  
Of a father's fondness these ills arose.  
For thee I've been ambitious, base, and bloody:  
For thee I've plung'd into this sea of sin;  
Stemming the tide with only one weak hand,  
While t'other bore the crown (to wreath thy brow)  
Whose weight has sunk me, ere I reach'd the shore.

*Gar.* Fatal ambition! Hark! the foe is enter'd: [*Shout.*  
The shrillness of that shout speaks them at hand.  
' We have no time to search into the cause  
' Of this surprising and most fatal error.

' What's

‘ What’s to be done? the king’s death known, would  
 ‘ The few remaining foldiers with despair, [strike  
 ‘ And make them yield to mercy of the conqueror.’

*Alon.* My lord, I’ve thought how to conceal the body.  
 Require me not to tell the means, till done,  
 Lest you forbid what you may then approve.

[*Goes in. Shout.*

*Gon.* They shout again! Whate’er he means to do,  
 ’Twere fit the foldiers were amus’d with hopes;  
 And in the mean time fed with expectation  
 To see the king in person at their head.

*Gar.* Were it a truth, I fear ’tis now too late.  
 But I’ll omit no care, nor haste,; and try,  
 Or to repel their force, or bravely die. [*Exit Garcia.*

*Re-enter Alonzo.*

*Gon.* What hast thou done, Alonzo?

*Alon.* Such a deed,  
 As but an hour ago I’d not have done,  
 ’Though for the crown of universal empire.  
 But what are kings reduc’d to common clay?  
 Or who can wound the dead?—I’ve from the body  
 Sever’d the head, and in an obscure corner  
 Dispos’d it, muffled in the mute’s attire,  
 Leaving to view of them who enter next,  
 Alone the undistinguishable trunk:  
 Which may be still mistaken by the guards  
 For Osmyn, if in seeking for the king,  
 They chance to find it.

*Gon.* ’Twas an act of horror;  
 And of a piece with this day’s dire misdeeds.  
 But ’tis no time to ponder or repent.  
 Haste thee, Alonzo, haste thee hence with speed,  
 To aid my son. I’ll follow with the last  
 Reserve, to reinforce his arms: at least,  
 I shall make good and shelter his retreat.

[*Exeunt severally.*

*Enter Zara, followed by Selim, and two mutes bearing  
 the bowls.*

*Za.* Silence and solitude are every where.  
 Through all the gloomy ways and iron doors  
 That hither lead, nor human face nor voice  
 Is seen or heard. ‘ A dreadful din was wont

‘ To

' To grate the sense, when enter'd here, from groans  
 ' And howls of slaves condemn'd; from clink of chains,  
 ' And crash of rusty bars and creaking hinges:  
 ' And ever and anon the fight was dash'd  
 ' With frightful faces, and the meagre looks  
 ' Of grim and ghastly executioners.  
 ' Yet more this stillness terrifies my soul,  
 ' Than did that scene of complicated horrors.  
 ' It may be that the cause of this my errand  
 ' And purpose, being chang'd from life to death,  
 ' Had also wrought this chilling change of temper.  
 ' Or does my heart bode more? What can it more  
 ' Than death?'

Let 'em set down the bowls, and warn Alphonso  
That I am here—so. You return and find

[Mutes going in.

The king; tell him, what he requir'd, I've done,  
And wait his coming to approve the deed. [Exit Selim.

*Enter Mutes.*

Zara. What have you seen? Ha! wherefore stare you  
thus [The mutes return and look affrighted.

With haggard eyes? Why are your arms across?

Your heavy and desponding heads hung down?

Why is't you more than speak in these sad signs?

Give me more ample knowledge of this mourning.

[They go to the scene, which opening, she perceives the body.

Ha! prostrate! bloody! headless! Oh——I'm lost.

Oh, Osmyn! Oh, Alphonso! Cruel fate!

Cruel, cruel, Oh, more than killing object!

I came prepar'd to die, and see thee die—

Nay, came prepar'd myself to give thee death—

But cannot bear to find thee thus, my Osmyn——

Oh, this accurs'd, this base, this treach'rous king!

*Enter Selim.*

Selim. I've fought in vain, for no where can the king  
Be found——

Zar. Get thee to hell, and seek him there. [Stabs him.

His hellish rage had wanted means to act,

But for thy fatal and pernicious counsel.

Sel. You thought it better then——but I'm rewarded.

The mute you sent, by some mischance was seen,

And

And forc'd to yield your letter with his life ;  
 I found the dead and bloody body stripp'd——  
 My tongue falters, and my voice fails——I sink——  
 Drink not the poison—for Alphonso is—— [Dies.]

*Zar.* As thou art now—and I shall quickly be.  
 'Tis not that he is dead : for 'twas decreed  
 We both should die. Nor is't that I survive ;  
 I have a certain remedy for that.  
 But, Oh, he dy'd unknowing in my heart.  
 He knew I lov'd, but knew not to what height :  
 Nor that I meant to fall before his eyes,  
 A martyr and a victim to my vows.  
 Insensible of this last proof he's gone ;  
 ' Yet fate alone can rob his moral part  
 ' Of sense ; his soul still sees and knows each purpose,  
 ' And fix'd event, of my persisting faith.'  
 Then wherefore do I pause ? Give me the bowl.

[A mute kneels and gives one of the bowls.]

Hover a moment, yet, thou gentle spirit,  
 Soul of my love, and I will wait thy flight.  
 This to our mutual bliss, when join'd above. [Drinks.]  
 Oh, friendly draught, already in my heart.  
 Cold, cold ; my veins are icicles and frost.  
 I'll creep into his bosom, lay me there ;  
 Cover us close—or I shall chill his breast,  
 And fright him from my arms—See, see, he slides  
 Still farther from me ; look, he hides his face,  
 I cannot feel it—quite beyond my reach,—  
 Oh, now he's gone, and all is dark—— [Dies.]

[The mutes kneel and mourn over her.]

*Enter Almeria and Leonora.*

*Alm.* Oh, let me seek him in this horrid cell ;  
 For in the tomb, or prison, I alone  
 Must hope to find him.

*Leon.* Heavens ! what dismal scene  
 Of death is this ? The eunuch Selim slain !

*Alm.* Shew me, for I am come in search of death ;  
 But want a guide ; for tears have dimm'd my sight.

*Leon.* Alas, a little farther, and behold  
 Zara all pale and dead ! two frightful men,  
 Who seem the murderers, kneel weeping by ;  
 Feeling remorse too late for what they've done.

But, Oh, forbear—lift up your eyes no more;  
 But haste away, fly from this fatal place,  
 Where miseries are multiply'd; return,  
 Return, and look not on; for there's a dagger  
 Ready to stab the sight, and make your eyes  
 Rain blood——

*Alm.* Oh, I foreknow, foresee that object.  
 Is it at last then so? Is he then dead?

' What, dead at last? quite, quite, for every dead?  
 ' There, there, I see him; there he lies, the blood  
 ' Yet bubbling from his wounds—Oh, more than savage!  
 ' Had they or hearts or eyes that did this deed?  
 ' Could eyes endure to guide such cruel hands?  
 ' Are not my eyes guilty alike with theirs,  
 ' That thus can gaze, and yet not turn to stone?

——I do not weep! The springs of tears are dry'd;  
 And of a sudden I am calm, as if

All things were well; and yet my husband's murder'd!  
 Yes, yes, I know to mourn! I'll sluice this heart,  
 The source of woe, and let the torrent loose.

——Those men have left to weep! they look on me!  
 I hope they murder all on whom they look.

Behold me well; your bloody hands have err'd,  
 And wrongfully have slain those innocents:  
 I am the sacrifice design'd to bleed,

And come prepar'd to yield my throat——They shake  
 Their heads in sign of grief and innocence!

*[They point at the bowl on the ground.]*

And point! What mean they? Ha! a cup; Oh, well,  
 I understand what med'cine has been here.

Oh, noble thirst! yet greedy to drink all——

——Oh, for another draught of death——' What mean  
 they? *[They point at the other cup.]*

' Ha! point again! 'tis there, and full, I hope.

' Thanks to the lib'ral hand that fill'd thee thus,  
 I'll drink my glad acknowledgment——

*Leon.* Oh, hold

For mercy's sake, upon my knee I beg——

*Alm.* With thee the kneeling world should beg in vain.  
 Seest thou not there? Behold who prostrate lies,  
 And pleads against thee; who shall then prevail?  
 Yet I will take a cold and parting leave  
 From his pale lips; I'll kiss him ere I drink,

Lest the rank juice should blister on my mouth,  
And stain the colour of my last adieu.

Horror! a headless trunk! nor lips nor face,

*[Coming near the body, starts and lets fall the cup.]*

But spouting veins, and mangled flesh! Oh, Oh!

*Enter Alphonso, Heli, Perez, with Garcia prisoner.*

*Guards and attendants.*

*Alph.* Away, stand off, where is she? let me fly,  
Save her from death, and snatch her to my heart.

*Alm.* Oh!

*Alph.* Forbear; my arms alone shall hold her up,  
Warm her to life, and wake her into gladness.

‘ Oh, let me talk to thy reviving sense

‘ The words of joy and peace; warm thy cold beauties

‘ With the new flushing ardour of my cheek;

‘ Into thy lips pour the soft trickling balm

‘ Of cordial sighs; and reinspire thy bosom

‘ With the breath of love. Shine, awake, Almeria,’

Give a new birth to thy long-shaded eyes,

Then double on the day reflected light.

*Alm.* Where am I? Heav’n! what does this dream intend?

*Alph.* Oh, may’st thou never dream of less delight,  
Nor ever wake to less substantial joys.

*Alm.* Giv’n me again from death! Oh, all ye pow’rs,  
Confirm this miracle! Can I believe

My sight ‘ against my sight? and shall I trust

‘ That sense, which in one instant shews him dead

‘ And living?’—Yes, I will; I’ve been abus’d

With apparitions and affrighting phantoms:

This is my lord, my life, my only husband,

I have him now, and we no more will part.

My father too shall have compassion——

*Alph.* Oh, my heart’s comfort; ’tis not giv’n to this  
Frail life, to be intirely blest’d. E’en now,

In this extremest joy my soul can taste,

Yet I am dash’d to think that thou must weep;

Thy father fell where he design’d my death.

Gonzalez and Alonzo, both of wounds

Expiring, have, with their last breath, confess’d

The just decrees of Heav’n, which on themselves

Has turn’d their own most bloody purposes,

Nay, I must grant, 'tis fit you should be thus——

[*She weeps.*]

' Let 'em remove the body from her sight.'

Ill-fated Zara! Ha! a cup! Alas!

Thy error then is plain! but I were flint

Not to o'erflow in tribute to thy memory.

Oh, Garcia!——

Whose virtue has renounc'd thy father's crimes,

Seest thou, how just the hand of Heav'n has been?

Let us, who through our innocence survive,

Still in the paths of honour persevere,

And not from past or present ills despair;

For blessings ever wait on virtuous deeds;

And though a late, a sure reward succeeds.

[*Exeunt omnes.*]

END of the FIFTH ACT.



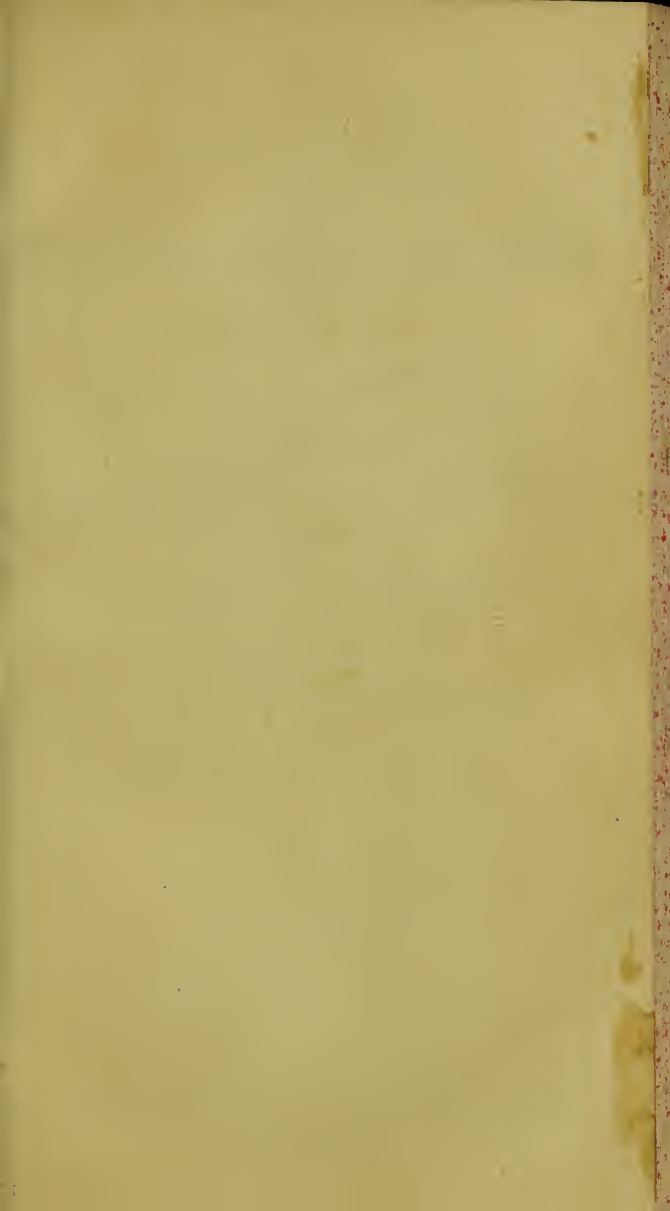
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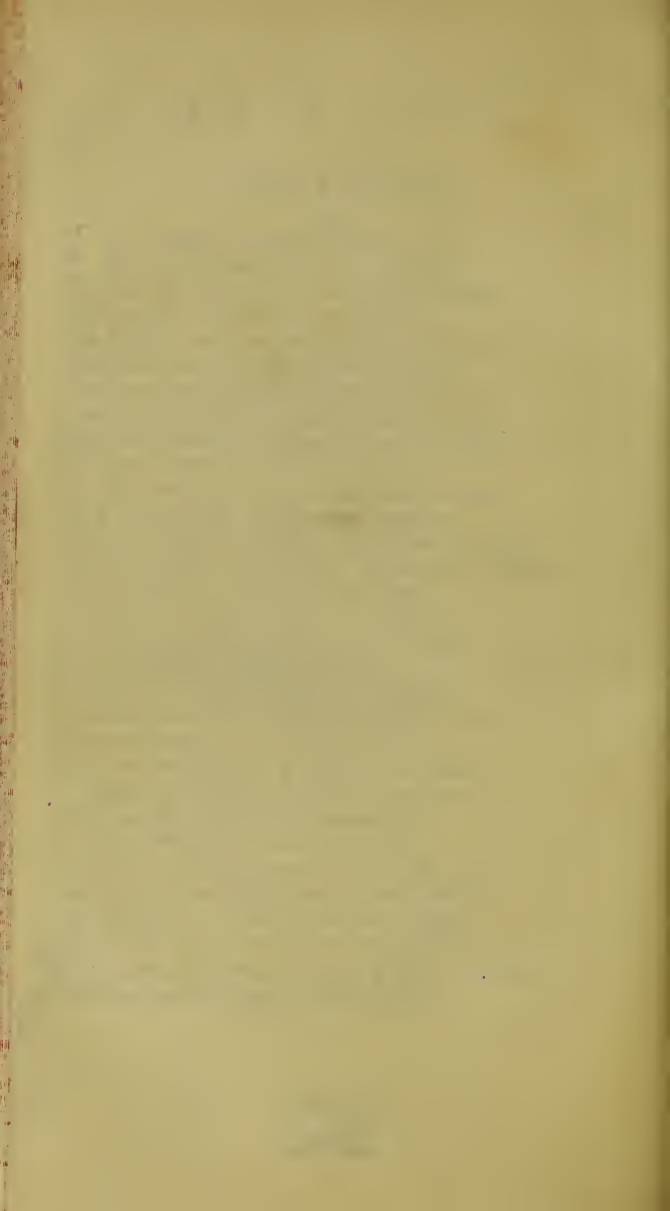
Spoken by ALMERIA.

**T**HE tragedy thus done, I am, you know,  
 No more a princess, but in statu quo;  
 And now as unconcern'd this mourning wear,  
 As if indeed a widow, or an heir.  
 I've leisure, now, to mark your sev'ral faces,  
 And know each critic by his sour grimaces.  
 To poison plays, I see them where they sit,  
 Scatter'd, like ratsbane, up and down the pit;  
 While others watch, like parish-searchers hir'd,  
 To tell of what disease the play expir'd.  
 Oh, with what joy they run to spread the news  
 Of a damn'd poet, and departed muse!  
 But if he 'scape, with what regret they're seiz'd!  
 And how they're disappointed, when they're pleas'd!  
 Critics to plays for the same end resort,  
 That surgeons wait on trials in a court:  
 For innocence condemn'd they've no respect,  
 Provided they've a body to dissect.  
 As Sussex men, that dwell upon the shore,  
 Look out when storms arise, and billows roar,  
 Devoutly praying, with uplifted hands,  
 That some well-laden ship may strike the sands,  
 To whose rich cargo they may make pretence,  
 And fatten on the spoils of Providence:  
 So critics throng to see a new play split,  
 And thrive and prosper on the wrecks of wit.  
 Small hope our poet from these prospects draws;  
 And therefore to the fair commends his cause.  
 Your tender hearts to mercy are inclin'd,  
 With whom, he hopes, this play will favour find,  
 Which was an off'ring to the sex design'd.









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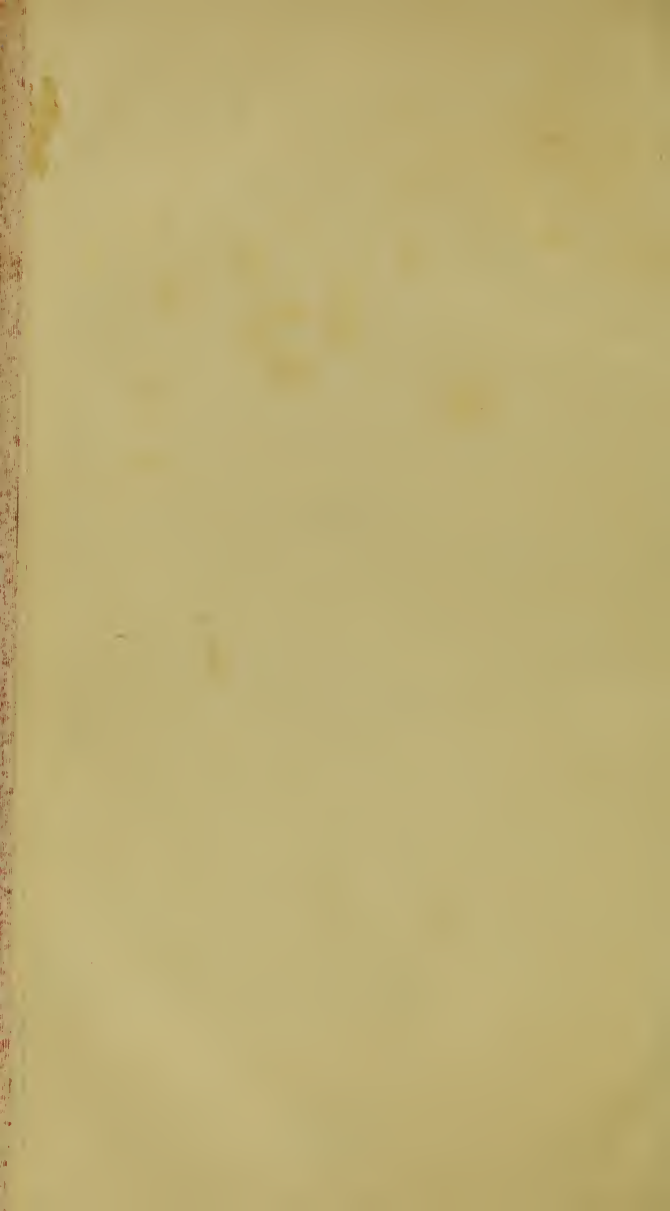
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BELL'S EDITION.



THE  
*DOUBLE DEALER.*

A COMEDY,

*As written by CONGREVE.*

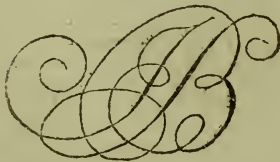
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LONDON:

Printed for JOHN BELL, near Exeter-Exchange, in the Strand.

MDCCLXXVII.

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To the Right Honourable

CHARLES MONTAGUE,

ONE OF THE

LORDS OF THE TREASURY.

S I R,

I Heartily wish this play were as perfect as I intended it, that it might be more worthy your acceptance; and that my Dedication of it to you might be more becoming that honour and esteem which I, with every body who is so fortunate as to know you, have for you. It had your countenance when yet unknown; and now it is made public, it wants your protection.

I would not have any body imagine, that I think this play without its faults, for I am conscious of several. I confess I designed (whatever vanity or ambition occasioned that design) to have written a true and regular comedy; but I found it an undertaking which put me in mind of—*Sudet multum, frustra que laboret ausus idem.* And now to make amends for the vanity of such a design, I do confess both the attempt, and the imperfect performance. Yet I must take the boldness to say, I have not miscarried in the whole; for the mechanical part of it is regular. That I may say with a little vanity, as a builder may say, he has built a house according to the model laid down before him; or a gardener that he has set his flowers in a knot of such or such a figure. I designed the moral first, and to that moral I invented the fable, and do not know that I have borrowed one hint of it any where. I made the plot as strong as I could, because it was single; and I made it single, because I would avoid confusion, and was resolved to preserve the three unities of the Drama. Sir, this discourse is very impertinent to you, whose judgment much better can discern the faults, than I can excuse them; and whose good-nature, like that of a lover, will find

out those hidden beauties (if there are any such) which it would be great immodesty for me to discover. I think I do not speak improperly when I call you a *Lover* of Poetry; for it is very well known she has been a very kind mistress to you; she has not denied you the last favour, and she has been fruitful to you in a most beautiful issue—If I break off abruptly here, I hope every body will understand that it is to avoid a commendation, which, as it is your due, would be most easy for me to pay, and too troublesome for you to receive.

I have, since the acting of this play, hearkened after the objections which have been made to it; for I was conscious where a true critic might have put me upon my defence, I was prepared for the attack; and am pretty confident I could have vindicated some parts, and excused others; and where there were any plain miscarriages, I would most ingenuously have confessed them. But I have not heard any thing said sufficient to provoke an answer. That which looks most like an objection, does not relate in particular to this play, but to all or most that ever have been written; and that is soliloquy. Therefore I will answer it, not only for my own sake, but to save others the trouble, to whom it may hereafter be objected.

I grant, that for a man to talk to himself, appears absurd and unnatural; and indeed it is so in most cases: but the circumstances which may attend the occasion make great alteration. It oftentimes happens to a man, to have designs which require him to himself, and in their nature cannot admit of a confidant. Such, for certain, is all villainy; and other less mischievous intentions may be very improper to be communicated to a second person. In such a case, therefore, the audience must observe whether the person upon the stage takes any notice of them at all, or no. For if he supposes any one to be by, when he talks to himself, it is monstrous and ridiculous to the last degree; nay, not only in this case, but in any part of a play, if there is expressed any knowledge of an audience, it is insufferable. But otherwise, when a man in soliloquy reasons with himself, and *pro's* and *con's*, and weighs all his designs, we ought not to imagine that this man either talks to us, or to himself; he is only thinking, and thinking such matter as were  
in-



inexcusable folly in him to speak. But because we are concealed spectators of the plot in agitation, and the poet finds it necessary to let us know the whole mystery of this contrivance, he is willing to inform us of this person's thoughts; and to that end is forced to make use of the expedient of speech, no better way being yet invented for the communication of thought.

Another very wrong objection has been made by some who have not taken leisure to distinguish the characters. The hero of the play, as they are pleased to call him, (meaning Mellefont) is a gull, and made a fool, and cheated. Is every man a gull and a fool that is deceived? At that rate I am afraid the two classes of men will be reduced to one, and the knaves themselves be at a loss to justify their title; but if an open-hearted honest man, who has an entire confidence in one whom he takes to be his friend, and whom he has obliged to be so; and who (to confirm him in his opinion) in all appearance, and upon several trials, has been so; if this man be deceived by the treachery of the other, must he of necessity commence fool immediately, only because the other has proved a villain? Ay, but there was a caution given to Mellefont, in the first act, by his friend Careless. Of what nature was that caution? only to give the audience some light into the character of Maskwell before his appearance, and not to convince Mellefont of his treachery; for that was more than Careless was then able to do: he never knew Maskwell guilty of any villainy; he was only a sort of man which he did not like. As for his suspecting his familiarity with my Lady Touchwood, let them examine the answer that Mellefont makes him, and compare it with the conduct of Maskwell's character through the play.

I would beg them again to look into the character of Maskwell before they accuse Mellefont of weakness for being deceived by him. For upon summing up the enquiry into this objection, it may be found they have mistaken cunning in one character for folly in another.

But there is one thing, at which I am more concerned than all the false criticisms that are made upon me; and that is, some of the ladies are offended. I am heartily sorry for it; for I declare I would rather disoblige all the critics in the world, than one of the fair-sex. They

are concerned that I have represented some women vicious and affected: How can I help it? It is the business of a comic poet to paint the vices and follies of human-kind; and there are but two sexes, male and female, *men* and *women*, which have a title to humanity: and if I leave one half of them out, the work will be imperfect. I should be very glad of an opportunity to make my compliment to those ladies who are offended; but they can no more expect it in a comedy, than to be tickled by a surgeon when he is letting them blood. They who are virtuous or discreet should not be offended; for such characters as these distinguish *them*, and make their beauties more shining and observed: and they who are of the other kind, may nevertheless pass for such, by seeming not to be displeas'd, or touch'd with the satire of this *Comedy*. Thus have they also wrongfully accus'd me of doing them a prejudice, when I have in reality done them a service.

You will pardon me, Sir, for the freedom I take of making answers to other people, in an epistle which ought wholly to be sacred to you: but since I intend the play to be so too, I hope I may take the more liberty of justifying it where it is in the right.

I must now, Sir, declare to the world how kind you have been to my endeavours; for in regard of what was well meant, you have excus'd what was ill performed. I beg you would continue the same method in your acceptance of this dedication. I know no other way of making a return to that humanity you shew'd, in protecting an infant, but by enrolling it in your service, now that it is of age, and come into the world. Therefore, be pleas'd to accept of this as an acknowledgment of the favour you have shewn me, and an earnest of the real service and gratitude of,

S I R,

*Your most obliged,*

*Humble Servant,*

WILLIAM CONGREVE.

To my dear Friend Mr. CONGREVE, on his Comedy,  
called, *The DOUBLE DEALER.*

WELL then ; the promis'd hour is come at last ;  
 The present age of wit obscures the past :  
 Strong were our fires, and as they fought they writ,  
 Conqu'ring with force of arms, and dint of wit ;  
 Theirs was the giant race, before the flood ;  
 And thus, when Charles return'd, our empire stood.  
 Like Janus, he the stubborn foil manur'd,  
 With rules of husbandry the rankness cur'd :  
 Tam'd us to manners, when the stage was rude,  
 And boist'rous English wit with art indu'd.  
 Our age was cultivated thus at length ;  
 But what we gain'd in skill we lost in strength.  
 Our builders were, with want of genius, curst ;  
 The second temple was not like the first :  
 'Till you the best Vitruvius come at length,  
 Our beauties equal, but excel our strength.  
 Firm Doric pillars found your solid base ;  
 The fair Corinthian crowns the higher space ;  
 Thus all below is strength, and all above is grace. }  
 In easy dialogue is Fletcher's praise :  
 He mov'd the mind, but had no pow'r to raise.  
 Great Johnson did by strength of judgment please :  
 Yet doubling Fletcher's force, he wants his ease.  
 In diff'rent talents both adorn'd their age ;  
 One for the study, t'other for the stage.  
 But both to Congreve justly shall submit,  
 One match'd in judgment, both o'er-match'd in wit.  
 In him all beauties of this age we see,  
 Etherege's courtship, Southerne's purity ;  
 The satire, wit, and strength of manly Wycherley. }  
 All this in blooming youth you have achiev'd ;  
 Nor are your foil'd cotemporaries griev'd ;  
 So much the sweetness of your manners move,  
 We cannot envy you, because we love.  
 Fabius might joy with Scipio, when he saw  
 A beardless Consul made against the law,  
 And join his suffrage to the votes of Rome ;  
 Though he with Hannibal was overcome.

Thus old Romano bow'd to Raphael's fame,  
And scholar to the youth he taught, became.

Oh, that your brows my laurel had sustain'd,  
Well had I been depos'd, if you had reign'd!

The father had descended for the son;

For only you are lineal to the throne.

Thus when the State one Edward did depose,

A greater Edward in his room arose.

But now, not I, but poetry is curs'd,

For Tom the second reigns, like Tom the first.

But let them not mistake my patron's part,

Nor call his charity their own desert.

Yet this I prophesy; thou shalt be seen

(Tho' with some short parenthesis between)

High on the throne of Wit; and seated there,

Not mine (that's little) but thy laurel wear.

Thy first attempt an early promise made,

That early promise this has more than paid,

So bold, yet so judiciously you dare,

That your least praise, is to be regular.

Time, place, and action, may with pains be wrought,

But genius must be born, and never can be taught.

This is your portion; this your native store;

Heav'n, that but once was prodigal before,

To Shakespear gave as much; he could not give him  
more.

Maintain your post; that's all the fame you need;

For 'tis impossible you should proceed.

Already I am worn with cares and age,

And just abandoning th' ungrateful stage;

Unprofitably kept at Heaven's expence,

I live a rent-charge on his providence:

But you, whom ev'ry muse and grace adorn,

Whom I foresee to better fortune born,

Be kind to my remains; and Oh, defend,

Against your judgment, your departed friend!

Let not th' insulting foe my fame pursue;

But shade those laurels which descend to you:

And take for tribute what these lines express:

You merit more; nor could my love do less.

JOHN DRYDEN.

## P R O L O G U E.

*M*OOORS have this way (as story tells) to know  
 Whether their brats are truly got, or no;  
 Into the sea the new-born babe is thrown,  
 There, as instinct directs, to swim or drown.  
 A barbarous device, to try if spouse  
 Has kept religiously her nuptial vows.

Such are the trials poets make of plays;  
 Only they trust to more inconstant seas;  
 So does our author, this his child commit  
 To the tempestuous mercy of the pit,  
 To know if it be truly born of Wit.

Critics, awaunt; for you are fish of prey,  
 And feed, like sharks, upon an infant play.  
 Be ev'ry monster of the deep away;  
 Let's have fair trial, and a clear sea.

Let Nature work, and do not damn too soon,  
 For life will struggle long, ere it sink down:  
 And will at least rise thrice before it drown.  
 Let us consider, had it been our fate,  
 Thus hardly to be prov'd legitimate!  
 I will not say we'd all in danger been,  
 Were each to suffer for his mother's sin:  
 But by my truth I cannot avoid thinking,  
 How nearly some good men might have scap'd sinking.  
 But, Heaven be prais'd, this custom is confin'd  
 Alone to th' offspring of the muses kind:  
 Our Christian cuckolds are more bent to pity;  
 I know not one Moor-husband in the city.  
 P'th' good man's arms the chopping bastard thrives,  
 For he thinks all his own that is his wives.

Whatever fate is for this play design'd,  
 The poet's sure he shall some comfort find:  
 For if his muse has play'd him false, the worst  
 That can befall him, is, to be divorc'd;  
 You husbands judge, if that be to be curs'd.

## D R A M A T I S P E R S O N Æ.

## M E N.

*Covent-Garden.*

<i>Maskwell</i> , a villain; pretended friend to <i>Mellefont</i> , gallant to <i>Lady Touchwood</i> , and in love with <i>Cynthia</i>	Mr. Sheridan.
<i>Lord Touchwood</i> , uncle to <i>Mellefont</i>	Mr. Clarke.
<i>Mellefont</i> , promised to, and in love with <i>Cynthia</i>	Mr. Wroughton.
<i>Careless</i> , his friend	Mr. Lewis.
<i>Lord Froth</i> , a solemn coxcomb	Mr. Booth.
<i>Brisk</i>	Mr. Woodward.
<i>Sir Paul Plyant</i> , an uxorious, foolish, old Knight; brother to <i>Lady Touchwood</i> , and father to <i>Cynthia</i>	Mr. Macklin.

## W O M E N.

<i>Lady Touchwood</i> , in love with <i>Mellefont</i>	Mrs. Jackson.
<i>Cynthia</i> , daughter to <i>Sir Paul</i> by a former wife, promised to <i>Mellefont</i>	Miss Dayes.
<i>Lady Froth</i> , a great coquet; pretender to poetry, wit, and learning	Mrs. Mattocks.
<i>Lady Plyant</i> , insolent to her husband, and easy to any pretender	Miss Macklin.

*Chaplain, Boy, Footmen, and Attendants.**The SCENE, a Gallery in Lord Touchwood's House, with Chambers adjoining.*

THE  
DOUBLE DEALER.

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\* \* \* *The lines distinguished by inverted comas, 'thus,' are omitted in the representation.*

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A C T I.

SCENE. *A Gallery in Lord Touchwood's House, with Chambers adjoining.*

*Enter Careless, crossing the stage, with his hat, gloves, and sword in his hands, as just risen from table; Mellefont following him.*

MELLEFONT.

**N**ED, Ned, whither so fast! What, turn'd flincher! Why, you wo'not leave us?

*Care.* Where are the women? I'm weary of guzzling, and begin to think them the better company.

*Mel.* Then thy reason staggers, and thou'rt almost drunk.

*Care.* No, faith, but your fools grow noisy; and if a man must endure the noise of words without sense, I think the women have more musical voices, and become nonsense better.

*Mel.* Why, they are at the end of the gallery, retired to their tea and scandal, according to their ancient custom after dinner.—But I made a pretence to follow you, because I had something to say to you in private, and I am not like to have many opportunities this evening.

*Care.* And here's this coxcomb most critically come to interrupt you.

*Enter*

*Enter Brisk.*

*Brisk.* Boys, boys, lads, where are you? What, do you give ground? Mortgage for a bottle, ha? Careless, this is your trick; you are always spoiling company by leaving it.

*Care.* And thou art always spoiling company by coming into it.

*Brisk.* Pooh, ha, ha, ha, I know you envy me. Spite, proud spite, by the gods! and burning envy.—I'll be judged by Mellefont here, who gives and takes raillery better, you or I. Pshaw, man, when I say you spoil company by leaving it, I mean you leave nobody for the company to laugh at. I think there I was with you, ha! Mellefont.

*Mel.* O' my word, Brisk, that was a home thrust—you have silenced him.

*Brisk.* Oh, my dear Mellefont, let me perish if thou art not the soul of conversation, the very essence of wit, and spirit of wine.—The deuce take me, if there were three good things said, or one understood, since thy amputation from the body of our society.—He, I think that's pretty and metaphorical enough: 'Egad, I could not have said it out of thy company—Careless, ha!

*Care.* Hum, what is it?

*Brisk.* O, *mon cœur!* What is't! Nay, gad I'll punish you for want of apprehension:—the deuce take me if I tell you.

*Mel.* No, no, hang him, he has no taste—But, dear Brisk, excuse me, I have a little business.

*Care.* Pr'ythee, get thee gone: thou see'st we are serious.

*Mel.* We'll come immediately if you'll but go in, and keep up good humour and sense in the company: Pr'ythee do——they'll fall asleep else.

*Brisk.* 'Egad so they will.—Well I will, I will; gad you shall command me from the zenith to the nadir.—But the deuce take me if I say a good thing 'till you come.—But pr'ythee, dear rogue, make haste, pr'ythee make haste, I shall burst else.—And yonder your uncle, my Lord Touchwood, swears he'll disinherit you, and Sir Paul Plyant threatens to disclaim you for a son-in-law, and my Lord Froth won't dance at your wedding to-mor-row;



row; nor the deuce take me, I won't write your epithalamium——and see what a condition you're like to be brought to.

*Mel.* Well, I'll speak but three words, and follow you.

*Brisk.* Enough, enough. Careless, bring your apprehension along with you. [Exit.

*Care.* Pert coxcomb.

*Mel.* Faith, 'tis a good-natured coxcomb, and has very entertaining follies——You must be more humane to him; at this juncture it will do me service. I'll tell you, I would have mirth continued this day at any rate; tho' patience purchase folly, and attention be paid with noise. There are times when sense may be unseasonable, as well as truth. Pr'ythee do thou wear none to-day; but allow Brisk to have wit, that thou mayst seem a fool.

*Care.* Why, how now, why this extravagant proposition?

*Mel.* O, I would have no room for serious design, for I am jealous of a plot. I would have noise and impertinence keep my Lady Touchwood's head from working: for Hell is not more busy than her brain, nor contains more devils than that imaginations.

*Care.* I thought your fear of her had been over—— Is not to-morrow appointed for your marriage with Cynthia, and her father Sir Paul Plyant come to settle the writings this day, on purpose?

*Mel.* True; but you shall judge whether I have not reason to be alarmed. None besides you and Maskwell are acquainted with the secret of my aunt Touchwood's violent passion for me. Since my first refusal of her addresses, she has endeavoured to do me all ill offices with my uncle; yet has managed them with that subtilty, that to him they have borne the face of kindness, while her malice, like a dark lanthorn, only shone upon me, where it was directed. Still it gave me less perplexity to prevent the success of her displeasure, than to avoid the importunities of her love; and of two evils, I thought myself favoured in her aversion: but whether urged by her despair, and the short prospect of time she saw, to accomplish her designs; whether the hopes of revenge, or of her love, terminated in the view of this my mar-

riage with Cynthia, I know not; but this morning she surprized me in my bed. —

*Care.* Was there ever such a fury! 'Tis well Nature has not put it into her sex's power to ravish.—Well, bless us! proceed. What followed?

*Mel.* What at first amazed me; for I looked to have seen her in all the transports of a slighted and revengeful woman: but when I expected thunder from her voice, and lightning in her eyes, I saw her melted into tears, and hushed into a sigh. It was long before either of us spoke, passion had tied her tongue, and amazement mine.—In short, the consequence was thus: she omitted nothing that the most violent love could urge, or tender words express; which when she saw had no effect, but still I pleaded honour and nearness of blood to my uncle, then came the storm I feared at first; for starting from my bed-side like a fury, she flew to my sword, and with much ado I prevented her doing me or herself a mischief: having disarmed her, in a gust of passion she left me, and in a resolution, confirmed by a thousand curses, not to close her eyes, 'till they had seen my ruin.

*Care.* Exquisite woman! But what the devil does she think thou hast no more sense than to get an heir upon her body to disinherit thyself: for, as I take it, this settlement upon you, is with a proviso that your uncle have no children.

*Mel.* It is so. Well, the service you are to do me will be a pleasure to yourself; I must get you to engage my Lady Plyant all this evening, that my pious aunt may not work her to her interest. And if you chance to secure her to yourself, you may incline her to mine. She is handsome, and knows it; is very silly, and thinks she has sense, and has an old fond husband.

*Care.* I confess a very fair foundation for a lover to build upon.

*Mel.* For my Lord Froth, he and his wife will be sufficiently taken up with admiring one another, and Brisk's galantry, as they call it. I'll observe my uncle myself; and Jack Maskwell has promised me to watch my aunt narrowly, and give me notice upon any suspicion. As for Sir Paul, my wife father-in-law that is to be, my dear Cynthia has such a share in his fatherly fondness, he would

would scarce make her a moment uneasy, to have her happy hereafter.

*Care.* So, you have manded your works; but I wish you may not have the weakest guard where the enemy is strongest.

*Mel.* Maskwell, you mean; pr'ythee why should you suspect him?

*Care.* Faith, I cannot help it; you know I never liked him; I am a little superstitious in physiognomy.

*Mel.* He has obligations of gratitude to bind him to me; his dependence upon my uncle is through my means.

*Care.* Upon your aunt, you mean.

*Mel.* My aunt!

*Care.* I am mistaken if there be not a familiarity between them you do not suspect, notwithstanding her passion for you.

*Mel.* Pooh, pooh, nothing in the world but his design to do me service; and he endeavours to be well in her esteem, that he may be able to effect it.

*Care.* Well, I shall be glad to be mistaken: but your aunt's aversion in her revenge cannot be any way so effectually shewn, as in bringing forth a child to disinherit you. She is handsome and cunning, and naturally wanton. Maskwell is flesh and blood at best, and opportunities between them are frequent. His affection to you, you have confessed, is grounded upon his interest, that you have transplanted; and should it take root in my lady, I do not see what you can expect from the fruit.

*Mel.* I confess the consequence is visible, were your suspicions just.—But see, the company is broke up, let us meet them.

*Enter Lord Touchwood, Lord Froth, Sir Paul Plyant, and Brisk.*

*Ld. T.* Out upon't, nephew—leave your father-in-law, and me, to maintain our ground against young people.

*Mel.* I beg your Lordship's pardon—we were just returning.—

*Sir P.* Were you, son? Gadsbud, much better as it is—Good, strange! I swear I'm almost tipsy—t'other bottle would have been too powerful for me—as sure as

can be it would.—We wanted your company, but Mr. Brisk—where is he? I swear and vow he's a most facetious person—and the best company.—And my Lord Froth, your Lordship is so merry a man, he, he, he.

*Ld. F.* O foy, Sir Paul, what do you mean? Merry! O barbarous! I'd as lieve you called me fool.

*Sir P.* Nay, I protest and vow now, 'tis true; when Mr. Brisk jokes, your Lordship's laugh does so become you, he, he, he.

*Ld. F.* Ridiculous! Sir Paul, you're strangely mistaken; I find Champagne is powerful. I assure you, Sir Paul, I laugh at nobody's jest but my own, or a lady's; I assure you, Sir Paul.

*Brisk.* How! how, my Lord! What, affront my wit! Let me perish, do I never say any thing worthy to be laughed at?

*Ld. F.* O foy, don't misapprehend me; I don't say so, for I often smile at your conceptions. But there is nothing more unbecoming a man of quality, than to laugh; 'tis such a vulgar expression of the passion! every body can laugh. Then especially to laugh at the jest of an inferior person, or when any body else of the same quality does not laugh with one. Ridiculous! to be pleased with what pleases the croud! Now, when I laugh, I always laugh alone.

*Brisk.* I suppose that's because you laugh at your own jests, 'egad, ha, ha, ha.

*Ld. F.* He, he, I swear tho', your raillery provokes me to a smile.

*Brisk.* Ay, my Lord, it's a sign I hit you in the teeth, if you shew 'em.

*Ld. F.* He, he, he, I swear that's so very pretty, I can't forbear.

*Caro.* I find a quibble bears more sway in your Lordship's face than a jest.'

*Ld. T.* Sir Paul, if you please we'll retire to the ladies, and drink a dish of tea to settle our heads.

*Sir P.* With all my heart.—Mr. Brisk, you'll come to us—or call me when you joke—I'll be ready to laugh incontinently. [*Exeunt Ld. Touch. and Sir Paul.*]

*Mel.* But does your Lordship never see comedies?

*Ld. F.* O yes, sometimes, but I never laugh.

*Mel.*

*Mel.* No?

*Ld. F.* Oh, no—never laugh indeed, Sir.

*Care.* No! Why, what d'ye go there for?

*Ld. F.* To distinguish myself from the commonalty, and mortify the poets;—the fellows grow so conceited when any of their foolish wit prevails upon the side-boxes.—I swear——he, he, he, I have often constrained my inclinations to laugh——he, he, he, to avoid giving them encouragement.

*Mel.* You are cruel to yourself, my Lord, as well as malicious to them.

*Ld. F.* I confess I did myself some violence at first, but now I think I have conquered it.

*Brisk.* Let me perish, my Lord, but there is something very particular in the humour; 'tis true, it makes against wit, and I'm sorry for some friends of mine that write, but 'egad, I love to be malicious.—Nay, deuce take me, there's wit in't too—and wit must be foiled by wit; cut a diamond with a diamond, no other way, 'egad.

*Ld. F.* Oh, I thought you would not be long before you found out the wit.

*Care.* Wit! In what? Where the Devil's the wit in not laughing when a man has a mind to't?

*Brisk.* O lord, why, can't you find it out?—Why, there 'tis, in the not laughing.—Don't you apprehend me?—My Lord, Careless is a very honest fellow, but hark ye—you understand me, somewhat heavy, a little shallow, or so.—Why, I'll tell you now, suppose now you come up to me—Nay, pr'ythee Careless be instructed. Suppose, as I was saying, you come up to me holding your sides, and laughing, as if you would—Well—I look grave, and ask the cause of this immoderate mirth—You laugh on still, and are not able to tell me—Still I look grave, not so much as smile.——

*Care.* Smile, no, what the Devil should you smile at, when you suppose I can't tell you?

*Brisk.* Pshaw, pshaw, pr'ythee don't interrupt me.—But I tell you, you shall tell me—at last—But it shall be a great while first.

*Care.* Well; but pr'ythee don't let it be a great while, because I long to have it over.

*Brisk.* Well then, you tell me some good jest, or very witty thing, laughing all the while as if you were ready to die—and I hear it, and look thus.—Would not you be disappointed?

*Care.* No: for if it were a witty thing, I should not expect you to understand it.

*Ld. F.* O foy, Mr. Careless, all the world allows Mr. Brisk to have wit; my wife says he has a great deal. I hope you think her a judge.

*Brisk.* Pooh, my Lord, his voice goes for nothing.—I can't tell how to make him apprehend.—Take it t'other way. Suppose I say a witty thing to you?

*Care.* Then I shall be disappointed indeed.

*Mel.* Let him alone, Brisk, he is obstinately bent not to be instructed.

*Brisk.* I'm sorry for him, the deuce take me.

*Mel.* Shall we go to the ladies, my Lord?

*Ld. F.* With all my heart;—methinks we are a solitude without them.

*Mel.* Or, what say you to another bottle of Champagne?

*Ld. F.* O, for the universe, not a drop more, I beseech you. Oh, intemperate! I have a flushing in my face already. [*Takes out a pocket glass, and looks in it.*]

*Brisk.* Let me see, let me see, my Lord, I broke my glass that was in the lid of my snuff-box. Hum! Deuce take me, I have encouraged a pimple here too.

[*Takes the glass, and looks.*]

*Ld. F.* Then you must mortify him with a patch; my wife shall supply you. Come, gentlemen, *allons*, here is company coming. [*Exeunt.*]

*Enter Lady Touchwood and Maskwell.*

*L. T.* I'll hear no more—Y'are false and ungrateful; come, I know you false.

*Mask.* I have been frail I confess, Madam, for your Ladyship's service.

*L. T.* That I should trust a man whom I had known betray his friend!

*Mask.* What friend have I betrayed; Or to whom?

*L. T.* Your fond friend Mellefont, and to me—  
Can you deny it?

*Mask.* I do not.

*L. T.* Have you not wronged my Lord, who has been a father to you in your wants, and given you being? Have you not wronged him in the highest manner, in his bed?

*Mask.* With your Ladyship's help, and for your service, as I told you before. I cannot deny that neither. Any thing more, Madam?

*L. T.* More! audacious villain. Oh, what's more is most my shame—Have you not dishonoured me?

*Mask.* No, that I deny; for I never told in all my life: so that accusation's answered.—On to the next.

*L. T.* Death, do you dally with my passion? Insolent devil! But have a care—provoke me not; for, by the eternal fire, you shall not escape my vengeance.—Calm villain! how unconcerned he stands, confessing treachery and ingratitude! Is there a vice more black!—Oh, I have excuses, thousands, for my faults; fire in my temper, passions in my soul, apt to every provocation; oppressed at once with love and with despair: but a sedate, a thinking villain, whose black blood runs temperately bad, what excuse can clear?

*Mask.* Will you be in temper, Madam? I would not talk not to be heard. I have been [*She walks about disordered.*] a very great rogue for your sake, and you reproach me with it; I am ready to be a rogue still, to do you service; and you are flinging conscience and honour in my face, to rebate my inclinations. How am I to behave myself? You know I am your creature, my life and fortune in your power; to disoblige you brings me certain ruin. Allow it, I would betray you, I would not be a traitor to myself: I do not pretend to honesty, because you know I am a rascal: but I would convince you from the necessity of my being firm to you.

*L. T.* Necessity, impudence! Can no gratitude incline you, no obligations touch you? 'Have not my fortune and my person been subjected to your pleasure?' Were you not in the nature of a servant, and have not I in effect made you lord of all, of me, and of my Lord? Where is that humble love, the languishing, that adoration, which once was paid me, and everlastingly engaged?

*Mask.*

*Mask.* Fixed, rooted in my heart; whence nothing can remove them, yet you——

*L. T.* Yet, what yet?

*Mask.* Nay, misconceive me not, Madam, when I say I have had a generous and a faithful passion, which you had never favoured but thro' revenge and policy.

*L. T.* Ha!

*Mask.* Look you, Madam, we are alone,—Pray contain yourself, and hear me. You know you loved your nephew when I first sighed for you; I quickly found it; an argument that I loved: for with that art you veiled your passion, 'twas imperceptible to all but jealous eyes. This discovery made me bold, I confess it; for by it I thought you in my power. Your nephew's scorn of you added to my hopes; I watched the occasion, and took you, just repulsed by him, warm at once with love and indignation; your disposition, my arguments, and happy opportunity, accomplished my design; I prest the yielding minute, and was blest. How I have loved you since, words have not shewn, then how should words express?

*L. T.* Well, mollifying devil!—And have I not met your love with forward fire?

*Mask.* Your zeal I grant was ardent, but misplaced; there was revenge in view; that woman's idol had defiled the temple of the god, and love was made a mock-worship.—A son and heir would have edged young Mellefont upon the brink of ruin, and left him none but you to catch at for prevention.

*L. T.* Again, provoke me! Do you wind me like a larum, only to rouse my stilled soul for your diversion? Confusion!

*Mask.* Nay, Madam, I am gone, if you relapse——What needs this? I say nothing but what you yourself, in open hours of love, have told me. Why should you deny it? Nay, how can you? Is not all this present heat owing to the same fire? Do you not love him still? How have I this day offended you, but in not breaking off his match with Cynthia? which, ere to-morrow, shall be done——had you but patience.

*L. T.* How, what said you, Maskwell,——Another caprice to unwind my temper?

*Mask.*



*Mask.* By Heav'n, no; I am your slave, the slave of all your pleasures; and will not rest 'till I have given you peace, would you suffer me.

*L. F.* Oh, Maskwell, in vain do I disguise me from thee, thou knowest me, knowest the very inmost windings 'and recesses' of my soul.—'Oh, Mellefont! I 'burn:' married to-morrow! Despair strikes me! Yet my soul knows I hate him too: let him but once be mine, 'and next immediate ruin seize him.'

*Mask.* Compose yourself, you shall possess and ruin him too—Will that please you?

*L. F.* How, how? thou dear, thou precious villain, how?

*Mask.* You have already been tampering with my Lady Plyant.

*L. F.* I have; she is ready for any impression I think fit.

*Mask.* She must be thoroughly persuaded that Mellefont loves her.

*L. F.* She is so credulous that way naturally, and likes him so well, that she will believe it faster than I can persuade her. But I don't see what you can propose from such a trifling design; for her first conversing with Mellefont will convince her of the contrary.

*Mask.* I know it—I don't depend upon it.—But it will prepare something else; and gain us leisure to lay a stronger plot.—If I gain a little time, I shall not want contrivance.

One minute gives invention to destroy,  
What to rebuild, will a whole age employ.

[*Exeunt.*]

END of the FIRST ACT.

A C T II.

*Enter Lady Froth and Cynthia.*

CYNTHIA.

**I**NDEED, Madam! Is it possible your Ladyship could have been so much in love?

*L. F.* I could not sleep; I did not sleep one wink for three weeks together.

*Cyn.*

*Cyn.* Prodigious! I wonder want of sleep, and so much love, and so much wit as your Ladyship has, did not turn your brain.

*L. F.* O my dear Cynthia, you must not rally your friend—but really, as you say, I wonder too—but then I had a way. For between you and I, I had whimsies and vapours, but I gave them vent.

*Cyn.* How, pray Madam?

*L. F.* O, I writ, writ abundantly——Do you never write?

*Cyn.* Write, what?

*L. F.* Songs, elegies, satires, encomiums, panegyrics, lampoons, plays, or heroic poems.

*Cyn.* O lord, not I, Madam; I am content to be a courteous reader.

*L. F.* O inconsistent! in love, and not write! If my Lord and I had been both of your temper, we had never come together——O bless me! what a sad thing would that have been, if my Lord and I should never have met!

*Cyn.* Then neither my Lord nor you would ever have met with your match, on my conscience.

*L. F.* O' my conscience no more we should; thou say'st right——for sure my Lord Froth is as fine a gentleman, and as much a man of quality! Ah! nothing at all of the common air——I think I may say he wants nothing but a blue ribband and a star, to make him shine the very phosphorus of our hemisphere. Do you understand those two hard words? If you don't, I'll explain them to you.

*Cyn.* Yes, yes, Madam, I am not so ignorant.——At least I won't own it, to be troubled with your instructions

[*Afide.*

*L. F.* Nay, I beg your pardon; but being derived from the Greek, I thought you might have escaped the etymology.——But I am the more amazed, to find you a woman of letters, and not write! Bless me! how can Mellefont believe you love him?

*Cyn.* Why faith, Madam, he that won't take my word, shall never have it under my hand.

*L. F.* I vow Mellefont's a pretty gentleman, but methinks he wants a manner.

*Cyn.* A manner! What's that, Madam?

*L. F.* Some distinguishing quality, as for example, the *bel air* or *brillant* of Mr. Brisk; the solemnity, yet complaisance of my Lord, or something of his own that should look a little *je ne sçai quoi*; he is too much a mediocrity in my mind.

*Cyn.* He does not indeed affect either pertness or formality, for which I like him —— Here he comes.

*Enter Lord Froth, Mellefont, and Brisk.*

Impertinent creature! I could almost be angry with her now. [*Aside.*]

*L. F.* My Lord, I have been telling Cynthia how much I have been in love with you; I swear I have; I'm not ashamed to own it now; Ah! it makes my heart leap, I vow I sigh when I think on't:—My dear Lord! ha, ha, ha, do you remember, my Lord?

[*Squeezes him by the hand, looks kindly on him, sighs, and then laughs out.*]

*Ld. F.* Pleasant creature! Perfectly well, Ah! that look! Ay, there it is; who could resist!——'Twas so my heart was made a captive at first, and ever since it has been in love with happy slavery.

*L. F.* O that tongue, that dear deceitful tongue! that charming softness in your mien and your expression, and then your bow! Good, my Lord, bow as you did when I gave you my picture; here, suppose this my picture—  
[*Gives him a pocket glass.*] Pray mind, my Lord; ah! he bows charmingly. Nay, my Lord, you shan't kiss it so much; I shall grow jealous, I vow now.

[*He bows profoundly low, then kisses the glass.*]

*Ld. F.* I saw myself there, and kissed it for your sake.

*L. F.* Ah! gallantry to the last degree—Mr. Brisk, you are a judge; was ever any thing so well bred as my Lord?

*Brisk.* Never any thing but your Ladyship, let me perish.

*L. F.* O prettily turned again; let me die but you have a great deal of wit.——Mr. Mellefont, don't you think Mr. Brisk has a world of wit?

*Mel.* O yes, Madam.

*Brisk.* O dear, Madam——

*L. F.* An infinite deal!

*Brisk.*

*Brisk.* Oh Heavens, Madam——

*L. F.* More wit than any body,

*Brisk.* I am everlastingly your humble servant, deuce take me, Madam.

*Ld. F.* Don't you think us a happy couple?

*Cyn.* I vow, my Lord, I think you the happiest couple in the world; ' for you are not only happy in one another and when you are together, but happy in yourselves, and by yourselves.'

*Ld. F.* I hope Mellefont will make a good husband too.

*Cyn.* 'Tis my interest to believe he will, my Lord.

*Ld. F.* D'ye think he'll love you as well as I do my wife? I am afraid not.

*Cyn.* I believe he'll love me better.

*Ld. F.* Heav'ns! that can never be; but why do you think so?

*Cyn.* Because he has not so much reason to be fond of himself.

*Ld. F.* O your humble servant for that, dear Madam. Well, Mellefont, you'll be a happy creature.

*Mel.* Ay, my Lord, I shall have the same reason for my happiness that your Lordship has; I shall think myself happy.

*Ld. F.* Ah, that's all.

*Brisk.* [*To Lady Froth.*] Your Ladyship is in the right; but 'egad I'm wholly turned into satire. I confess I write but seldom, but when I do——keen Iambics, 'egad. But my Lord was telling me, your Ladyship has made an essay toward an heroic poem.

*L. F.* Did my Lord tell you? Yes, I vow, and the subject is my Lord's love to me. And what do you think I call it? I dare swear you won't guess——*The Sillabub*, ha, ha, ha.

*Brisk.* Because my Lord's title's Froth, 'egad; ha, ha, ha, ha, deuce take me, very *à propos*, and surprizing, ha, ha, ha.

*L. F.* He, ay, is not it?——And then I call my Lord Spunofa; and myself, what do ye think I call myself?

*Brisk.* Laçtilla, may be——'Egad I cannot tell.

*L. F.* Bidy, that's all; just my own name.

*Brisk.*

*Brisk.* Bidly! 'Egad very pretty——Deuce take me if your Ladyship has not the art of surprizing the most naturally in the world——I hope you'll make me happy in communicating the poem.

*L. F.* O, you must be my confident, I must ask your advice.

*Brisk.* I'm your humble servant, let me perish——I presume your 'Ladyship has read Bossu?

*L. F.* O yes, and Rapine, and Dacier upon Aristotle and Horace.——My Lord, you must not be jealous, I'm communicating all to Mr. Brisk.

*Ld. F.* No, no, I'll allow Mr. Brisk; have you nothing about you to shew him, my dear?

*L. F.* Yes, I believe I have.——Mr. Brisk, come will you go into the next room, and there I'll shew you what I have. [Exit *L. Froth and Brisk.*

*Ld. F.* I'll walk a turn in the garden, and come to you. [Exit *Ld. Froth.*

*Mel.* You are thoughtful, Cynthia.

*Cyn.* I am thinking, tho' marriage makes man and wife one flesh, it leaves them still two fools; and they become more conspicuous by setting off one another.

*Mel.* That's only when two fools meet, and their follies are opposed.

*Cyn.* Nay, I have known two wits meet, and by the opposition of their wit, render themselves as ridiculous as fools. 'Tis an odd game we are going to play at; what think you of drawing stakes, and giving over in time?

*Mel.* No, hang it, that's not endeavouring to win, because it is possible we may lose; since we have shuffled and cut, let's e'en turn up trump now.

*Cyn.* Then I find it is like cards, if either of us have a good hand it is an accident of fortune.

*Mel.* No, marriage is rather like a game at bowls; fortune indeed makes the match, and the two nearest, and sometimes the two farthest are together, but the game depends entirely upon judgment.

*Cyn.* Still it is a game, and consequently one of us must be a loser.

*Mel.* Not at all; only a friendly trial of skill, and the winnings to be laid out in an entertainment.——'What's here, the music!——Oh, my Lord has promised the

‘ company a new song, we’ll get them to give it us by  
 ‘ the way. [*Musicians crossing the stage.*] Pray let us have  
 ‘ the favour of you, to practise the song before the com-  
 ‘ pany hear it.

## S O N G.

‘ Cynthia frowns whene’er I woo her,  
 ‘ Yet she’s vex’d if I give over;  
 ‘ Much she fears I should undo her,  
 ‘ But much more to lose her lover:  
 ‘ Thus, in doubting, she refuses;  
 ‘ And not winning, thus she loses.  
 ‘ Pr’ythee, Cynthia, look behind you,  
 ‘ Age and wrinkles will o’ertake you;  
 ‘ Then too late desire will find you,  
 ‘ When the power must forsake you:  
 ‘ Think, O think o’th’ sad condition,  
 ‘ To be past, yet wish fruition.’

*Mel.* You shall have my thanks below.

[*To the music, they go out.*]

*Enter Sir Paul Plyant and Lady Plyant.*

*Sir P.* Gads bud! I am provoked into a fermentation,  
 as my Lady Froth says; was ever the like read of in  
 story?

*L. P.* Sir Paul, have patience; let me alone to rattle  
 him up.

*Sir P.* Pray your Ladyship give me leave to be angry  
 —I’ll rattle him up, I warrant you, I’ll firk him with  
 a *certiorari*.

*L. P.* You firk him! I’ll firk him myself. Pray, Sir  
 Paul, hold you contented.

‘ *Cyn.* Bless me, what makes my father in such a pas-  
 ‘ sion! ——— I never saw him thus before.’

*Sir. P.* Hold yourself contented, my Lady Plyant, —  
 I find passion coming upon me by inflation, and I cannot  
 submit as formerly, therefore give way.

*L. P.* How now! will you be pleased to retire, and—

*Sir P.* No marry will I not be pleased; I am pleased  
 to be angry, that’s my pleasure at this time.

*Mel.* What can this mean!

*L. P.* Gads my life, the man's distracted; why how now, who are you? What am I? Slidikins, can't I govern you? What did I marry you for? Am I not to be absolute and uncontroulable? Is it fit a woman of my spirit and conduct should be contradicted in a matter of this concern!

*Sir P.* It concerns me, and only me:—Besides, I am not to be governed at all times. When I am in tranquility my Lady Plyant shall command Sir Paul; but when I am provoked to fury, I cannot incorporate with patience and reason,—as soon may tigers match with tigers, lambs with lambs, and every creature couple with its foe, as the poet says.——

*L. P.* He's hot-headed still! 'tis in vain to talk to you; but remember I have a curtain-lecture for you, you disobedient, headstrong brute.

*Sir P.* No, 'tis because I won't be headstrong, because I won't be a brute, and have my head fortified, that I am thus exasperated.—But I will protect my honour, and yonder is the violator of my fame.

*L. P.* 'Tis my honour that is concerned, and the violation was intended to me.—Your honour! you have none but what is in my keeping, and I can dispose of it when I please—therefore don't provoke me.

*Sir P.* Hum, gads-bud she says true—Well, my Lady, march on, I will fight under you then; I am convinced as far as passion will permit.

[*Lady Pl. aud' Sir Paul come up to Mellefont.*

*L. P.* Inhuman and treacherous——

*Sir P.* Thou serpent, and first tempter of woman-kind.——

*Cyn.* Bless me, Sir! Madam, what mean you?

*Sir P.* Thy, Thy, come away Thy, touch him not; come hither, girl, go not near him, there is nothing but deceit about him; snakes are in his peruke, and the crocodile of Nilus is in his belly, he will eat thee up alive.

*L. P.* Dishonourable, impudent creature!

*Mel.* For Heaven's sake, Madam, to whom do you direct this language?

*L. P.* Have I behaved myself with all the decorum and nicety, besitting the person of Sir Paul's wife? Have I preserved my honour as it were in a snow-house for

these three years past? Have I been white and unfullied even by Sir Paul himself?

*Sir P.* Nay, she has been an invincible wife, even to me, that's the truth on't.

*L. P.* Have I, I say, preserved myself like a fair sheet of paper for you to make a blot upon?

*Sir P.* And she shall make a simile with any woman in England.

*Mel.* I am so amazed, I know not what to say.

*Sir P.* Do you think my daughter, this pretty creature; gads-bud she's a wife for a cherubin! Do you think her fit for nothing but to be a stalking horse, to stand before you while you take aim at my wife? Gads-bud I was never angry before in my life, and I'll never be appeased again.

*Mel.* Hell and damnation! this is my aunt; such malice can be engendered no where else. [*Aside.*]

*L. P.* Sir Paul, take Cynthia from his sight; leave me to strike him with the remorse of his intended crime.

*Cyn.* Pray Sir, stay, hear him, I dare affirm he's innocent.

*Sir P.* Innocent! Why, hark'ee, come hither, Thy, hark'ee, I had it from his aunt, my sister Touchwood—Gads-bud, he does not care a farthing for any thing of thee, but thy portion; why, he's in love with my wife; he would have tantalized thee, and made a cuckold of thy poor father,—and that would certainly have broke my heart—I am sure if ever I should have horns, they would kill me; they would never come kindly, I should die of them, like a child that was cutting his teeth—— I should indeed, Thy—— therefore come away; but Providence has prevented all, therefore come away when I bid you.

*Cyn.* I must obey. [*Exeunt Sir Paul and Cynthia.*]

*L. P.* Oh, such a thing! the impiety of it startles me—to wrong so good, so fair a creature, and one that loves you tenderly—'Tis a barbarity of barbarities, and nothing could be guilty of it——

*Mel.* But the greatest villain imagination can form, I grant it; and next to the villainy of such a fact, is the villainy of aspersing me with the guilt. How? Which way was I to wrong her? For yet I understand you not.

*L. P.*



*L. P.* Why, gads my life, cousin Mellefont, you cannot be so peremptory as to deny it, when I tax you with it to your face; for, now Sir Paul is gone, you are *corum nobis*.

*Mel.* By Heaven I love her more than life, or——

*L. P.* Fiddle, faddle, don't tell of this and that, and every thing in the world, but give me mathemacular demonstration, answer me directly——But I have not patience——Oh! the impiety of it, as I was saying, and the unparalleled wickedness! O merciful father! How could you think to reverse nature so, to make the daughter the means of procuring the mother?

*Mel.* The daughter to procure the mother!

*L. P.* Ay, for tho' I am not Cynthia's own mother, I am her father's wife, and that's near enough to make it incest.

*Mel.* Incest! O my precious aunt, and the devil in conjunction. [Aside.]

*L. P.* O reflect upon the horror of that, and then the guilt of deceiving every body; marrying the daughter only to make a cuckold of the father; and then seducing me, debauching my purity, and perverting me from the road of virtue, in which I have trod' thus long, and never made one trip, not one *faux pas*; O consider it, what would you have to answer for, if you should provoke me to frailty? Alas! humanity is feeble, Heaven knows! very feeble, and unable to support itself.

*Mel.* Where am I? Is it day? and am I awake? Madam——

*L. P.* And nobody knows how circumstances may happen together;——to my thinking, now I could resist the strongest temptation——but yet I know, 'tis impossible for me to know whether I could or not; there's no certainty in the things of this life.

*Mel.* Madam, pray give me leave to ask you one question.——

*L. P.* O lord, ask me the question! I'll swear I'll refuse it; I swear I'll deny it——therefore don't ask me; nay you shan't ask me, I swear I'll deny it. O Gemini, you have brought all the blood into my face; I warrant I am as red as a turkey-cock; O fye, cousin Mellefont.

*Mel.* Nay, Madam, hear me; I mean——

*L. P.* Hear you, no, no; I'll deny you first, and hear you afterwards. For one does not know how one's mind may change upon hearing.—Hearing is one of the senses, and all the senses are fallible; I won't trust my honour, I assure you; my honour is infallible and uncomatible.

*Mel.* For Heaven's sake, Madam.

*L. P.* O name it no more—Bless me, how can you talk of Heaven, and have so much wickedness in your heart? May be you don't think it a sin,—they say some of you gentlemen don't think it a sin—may be it is no sin to them that don't think it so; indeed, if I did not think it a sin—but still my honour, if it were no sin—but then to marry my daughter for the conveniency of frequent opportunities—I'll never consent to that; as sure as can be I'll break the match.

*Mel.* Death and amazement—Madam, upon my knees—

*L. P.* Nay, nay, rise up; come, you shall see my good-nature. I know love is powerful, and nobody can help his passion: 'tis not your fault, nor I swear it is not mine.—How can I help it if I have charms? And how can you help it if you are made a captive? I swear it is pity it should be a fault—but my honour—well, but your honour too—but the sin!—well, but the necessity—O lord, here's somebody coming, I dare not stay.—Well, you must consider of your crime, and strive as much as can be against it—strive, be sure—but don't be melancholic, don't despair—but never think that I'll grant you any thing; O lord, no;—but be sure you lay aside all thoughts of the marriage; for tho' I know you don't love Cynthia, only as a blind for your passion to me, yet it will make me jealous—O lord, what did I say? Jealous! no, no, I can't be jealous, for I must not love you—therefore don't hope—but don't despair neither—O, they're coming, I must fly.

[*Exit.*

*Mel.* [*after a pause.*] So then—spite of my care and foresight I am caught, caught in my security.—Yet this was but a shallow artifice, 'unworthy of my Machiavelian aunt.' There must be more behind, this is but the first flash, the priming of her engine; destruction follows hard, if not most presently prevented.

*Enter*

*Enter Maskwell.*

Maskwell, welcome, thy presence is a view of land, appearing to my shipwrecked hopes; the witch has raised the storm, and her ministers have done their work; you see the vessels are parted.

*Mask.* I know it; I met Sir Paul towing away Cynthia. Come, trouble not your head, I'll join you together ere to-morrow morning, or drown between you in the attempt.

*Mel.* There's comfort in a hand stretched out to one that's sinking, though never so far off.

*Mask.* No sinking, nor no danger—Come, cheer up; why you don't know that while I plead for you, your aunt has given me a retaining fee;—nay, I am your greatest enemy, and she does but journey-work under me.

*Mel.* Ha! how's this?

*Mask.* What do ye think of my being employed in the execution of all her plots? Ha, ha, ha, by Heaven it is true; I have undertaken to break the match, I have undertaken to make your uncle disinherit you, to get you turned out of doors, and to—ha, ha, ha, I can't tell you for laughing—Oh, she has opened her heart to me—I am to turn you a grazing, and to—ha, ha, ha, marry Cynthia myself; there's a plot for you.

*Mel.* Ha! O see, I see my rising sun! light breaks thro' clouds upon me, and I shall live in day—O my Maskwell! how shall I thank or praise thee; thou hast outwitted woman.—But tell me, how couldst thou thus get into her confidence? Ha! how? But was it her contrivance to persuade my Lady Plyant into this extravagant belief?

*Mask.* It was, and to tell you the truth I encouraged it for your diversion; tho' it make you a little uneasy for the present, yet the reflexion of it must needs be entertaining—I warrant she was very violent at first.

*Mel.* Ha, ha, ha, ay, a very fury; but I was most afraid of her violence at last—If you had not come as you did, I don't know what she might have attempted.

*Mask.* Ha, ha, ha, I know her temper.—Well, you must know then, that all my contrivances were but bubbles; 'till at last I pretended to have been long secretly

n love with Cynthia; that did my business; that convinced your aunt I might be trusted; since it was as much my interest as hers to break the match: then, she thought my jealousy might qualify me to assist her in her revenge. And, in short, in that belief told me the secrets of her heart. At length, we made this agreement, if I accomplish her designs (as I told you before) she has engaged to put Cynthia with all her fortune into my power.

*Mel.* She is most gracious in her favour.—Well, and dear Jack, how hast thou contrived?

*Mask.* I would not have you stay to hear it now: for I don't know but she may come this way; I am to meet her anon; after that, I'll tell you the whole matter; be here in this gallery an hour hence, by that time I imagine our consultation may be over.

*Mel.* I will; 'till then success attend thee. [Exit.]

*Mask.* 'Till then success will attend me; for when I meet you I meet the only obstacle to my fortune. Cynthia, let thy beauty gild my crimes; and whatsoever I commit of treachery or deceit shall be imputed to me as a merit—Treachery, what treachery? Love cancels all the bonds of friendship, and sets men right upon their first foundations. Duty to kings, piety to parents, gratitude to benefactors, and fidelity to friends, are different and particular ties; but the name of rival cuts them all asunder, and is a general acquittance—Rival is equal, and Love, like Death, an universal leveller of mankind. Ha! but is there not such a thing as honesty? Yes, and whosoever has it about him, bears an enemy in his breast: for your honest man, as I take it, is that nice, scrupulous, conscientious person who will cheat nobody but himself; such another coxcomb as your wife man, who is too hard for all the world, and will be made a fool of by nobody but himself. Ha, ha, ha; well, for wisdom and honesty, give me cunning and hypocrisy; Oh, 'tis such a pleasure to angle for fair-faced fools!—Then that hungry gudgeon Credulity will bite at any thing—Why, let me see, I have the same face, the same words and accents when I speak what I do think, and when I speak what I do not think—the very same—and dear dissimulation is the only art not to be known from nature.

Why

Why will mankind be fools, and be deceiv'd?  
 And why are friends' and lovers' oaths believ'd?  
 When each who searches strictly his own mind,  
 May so much fraud and power of baseness find.

[*Exit.*]

END of the SECOND ACT.

ACT III.

*Enter Lord Touchwood, and Lady Touchwood.*

LADY TOUCHWOOD.

**M**Y Lord, can you blame my brother Plyant, if he refuse his daughter upon this provocation? The contract is void by this unheard of impiety.

*Ld. T.* I don't believe it true; he has better principles —pho, 'tis nonsense. Come, come, I know my Lady Plyant has a large eye, and would centre every thing in her own circle; 'tis not the first time she has mistaken respect for love, and made Sir Paul jealous of the civility of an undesigning person, the better to bespeak his security in her unfeigned pleasures.

*L. T.* You censure hardly, my Lord; my sister's honour is very well known.

*Ld. T.* Yes, I believe I know some that have been familiarly acquainted with it. This is a little trick wrought by some pitiful contriver, envious of my nephew's merit.

*L. T.* Nay, my Lord, it may be so, and I hope it will be found so: but that will require some time; for, in such a case as this, demonstration is necessary.

*Ld. T.* There should have been demonstration of the contrary too before it had been believed——

*L. T.* So I suppose there was.

*Ld. T.* How? Where? When?

*L. T.* That I can't tell; nay, I don't say there was—I am willing to believe as favourably of my nephew as I can.

*Ld. T.* I don't know that.

[*Half aside.*]

*L. T.* How? Don't you believe that, say you, my Lord?

*Ld. T.*

*Ld. T.* No, I don't say so—I confess I am troubled to find you so cold in his defence.

*L. T.* His defence! Bless me, would you have me defend an ill thing?

*Ld. T.* You believe it then?

*L. T.* I don't know; I am very unwilling to speak my thoughts in any thing that may be to my cousin's disadvantage; besides, I find, my Lord, you are prepared to receive an ill impression from any opinion of mine which is not consenting with your own: but since I am like to be suspected in the end, and 'tis a pain any longer to dissemble, I own it to you; in short I do believe it, nay, and can believe any thing worse, if it were laid to his charge——Don't ask me my reasons, my Lord, for they are not fit to be told you.

*Ld. T.* I am amazed! Here must be something more than ordinary in this. [*Aside.*] Not fit to be told me, Madam? You can have no interest wherein I am not concerned, and consequently the same reasons ought to be convincing to me, which create your satisfaction or disquiet.

*L. T.* But those which cause my disquiet I am willing to have remote from your hearing. Good my Lord, don't press me.

*Ld. T.* Don't oblige me to press you.

*L. T.* Whatever it was, 'tis past; and that is better to be unknown which cannot be prevented; therefore, let me beg you to rest satisfied.——

*Ld. T.* When you have told me, I will ——

*L. T.* You won't.

*Ld. T.* By my life, my dear, I will.

*L. T.* What if you cannot.

*Ld. T.* How? Then I must know; nay, I will. No more trifling—I charge you tell me—By all our mutual peace to come; upon your duty——

*L. T.* Nay, my Lord, you need say no more to make me lay my heart before you, but don't be thus transported; compose yourself; it is not of concern to make you lose one minute's temper; 'tis not, indeed, my dear.—'Nay, by this kiss you shan't be angry.' O lord, I wish I had not told you any thing——Indeed, my Lord, you have frightened me. Nay, look pleased, I'll tell you.

*Ld. T.*

*Ld. T.* Well, well.

*L. T.* Nay, but will you be calm?—Indeed it is nothing but——

*Ld. T.* But what?

*L. T.* But will you promise me not to be angry?—Nay, you must—not to be angry with Mellefont—I dare swear he's sorry—and were it to do again, would not——

*Ld. T.* Sorry, for what? 'Death, you rack me with delay.

*L. T.* Nay, no great matter, only——Well, I have your promise—pho; why nothing, only your nephew had a mind to amuse himself sometimes with a little gallantry towards me. Nay, I can't think he meant any thing seriously, but methought it looked oddly.

*Ld. T.* Confusion and Hell, what do I hear!

*L. T.* Or, may be, he thought he was not enough akin to me upon upon your account, and had a mind to create a nearer relation on his own; a lover, you know, my Lord—ha, ha, ha. Well, but that's all—' Now ' you have it;' well, remember your promise, my Lord, and don't take any notice of it to him.

*Ld. T.* No, no, no—Damnation!

*L. T.* Nay, I swear you must not—A little harmless mirth—only misplaced, that's all.—But if it were more 'tis over now, and all is well. For my part, I have forgot it; and so has he, I hope—for I have not heard any thing from him these two days.

*Ld. T.* These two days! Is it so fresh? Unnatural villain! 'Death, I'll have him stripped and turned naked out of my doors this moment, and let him rot and perish, incestuous brute!

*L. T.* Oh, for Heaven's sake, my Lord, you'll ruin me if you take such public notice of it, it will be a town-talk: consider your own and my honour—Nay, I told you, you would not be satisfied when you knew it.

*Ld. T.* Before I've done I will be satisfied. Ungrateful monster! How long?

*L. T.* Lord, I don't know:—I wish my lips had grown together when I told you—Almost a twelvemonth—Nay, I won't tell you any more 'till you are yourself. Pray, my Lord, don't let the company see you in this disorder—Yet, I confess, I cannot blame you; for I think

think I was never so surprized in my life—Who would have thought my nephew could have so misconstrued my kindness—But will you go into your closet, and recover your temper. I'll make an excuse of sudden business to the company, and come to you. Pray, good dear my Lord, let me beg you do now: I'll come immediately, and tell you all——Will you, my Lord?

*Ld. T.* I will——I am mute with wonder.

*L. T.* Well, but go now, here is somebody coming.

*Ld. T.* Well, I go—You won't stay, for I would hear more of this. [Exit.

*L. T.* I follow instantly——So.

*Enter Maskwell.*

*Mask.* This was a master-piece, and did not need my help—though I stood ready for a cue to come in and confirm all, had there been occasion.

*L. T.* Have you seen Mellefont?

*Mask.* I have; and am to meet him here about this time.

*L. T.* How does he bear his disappointment?

*Mask.* Secure in my assistance, he seemed not much afflicted, but rather laughed at the shallow artifice, which so little time must of necessity discover. Yet he is apprehensive of some farther design of yours, and has engaged me to watch you. I believe he will hardly be able to prevent your plot, yet I would have you use caution and expedition.

*L. T.* Expedition indeed; for all we do must be performed in the remaining part of this evening, and before the company break up, lest my Lord should cool, and have an opportunity to talk with him privately——My Lord must not see him again.

*Mask.* By no means; therefore you must aggravate my Lord's displeasure to a degree that will admit of no conference with him.——What think you of mentioning me?

*L. T.* How?

*Mask.* To my Lord, as having been privy to Mellefont's design upon you, but still using my utmost endeavours to dissuade him: 'tho' my friendship and love to him has made me conceal it; yet you may say, I threaten



‘ tened the next time he attempted any thing of that kind, to discover it to my Lord.’

*L. T.* To what end is this ?

*Mask.* It will confirm my Lord’s opinion of my honour and honesty, and create in him a new confidence in me, which (should this design miscarry) will be necessary to the forming another plot that I have in my head—to cheat you as well as the rest. [*Aside.*]

*L. T.* I’ll do it—I’ll tell him you hindered him once from forcing me.

*Mask.* Excellent ! your Ladyship has a most improving fancy. You had best go to my Lord, keep him as long as you can in his closet, and I doubt not but you will mould him to what you please ; your guests are so engaged in their own follies and intrigues, they’ll miss neither of you.

*L. T.* When shall we meet ?—At eight this evening in my chamber ; there rejoice at our success, and toy away an hour in mirth. [*Exit.*]

*Mask.* I will not fail.—— I know what she means by toying away an hour well enough. Pox, I have lost all my appetite to her ; yet she’s a fine woman, and I loved her once. ‘ But I don’t know, since I have been in a great measure kept by her, the case is altered ;’ what was my pleasure is become my duty : and I have as little stomach to her now as if I were her husband. Should she smoke my design upon Cynthia, I were in a fine pickle. She has a damned penetrating head, and knows how to interpret a coldness the right way ; therefore I must dissemble ardour and ecstasy, that’s resolv’d : How easily and pleasantly is that dissembled before fruition ! Pox on it, that a man can’t drink without quenching his thirst. Ha ! yonder comes Mellefont thoughtful. Let me think : meet her at eight—hum—ha ! by Heaven I have it—if I can speak to my Lord before—‘ Was it my brain or Providence ? no matter which’—I will deceive them all, and yet secure myself, ’twas a lucky thought ! Well, this double-dealing is a jewel. Here he comes, now for me——

[*Maskwell pretending not to see him, walks by him, and speaks as it were to himself.*]

D

Enter

*Enter Mellefont musing.*

*Mask.* Mercy on us, what will the wickedness of this world come to?

*Mel.* How now, Jack? What, so full of contemplation that you run over!

*Mask.* I'm glad you are come, for I could not contain myself any longer, and was just going to give vent to a secret, which nobody but you ought to drink down.—Your aunt is just gone from hence.

*Mel.* And having trusted thee with the secrets of her soul, thou art villainously bent to discover them all to me, ha?

*Mask.* I am afraid my frailty leans that way—But I don't know whether I can in honour discover them all.

*Mel.* All, all man. What, you may in honour betray her as far as she betrays herself. No tragical design upon my person, I hope.

*Mask.* No, but it is a comical design upon mine.

*Mel.* What dost thou mean?

*Mask.* Listen and be dumb—We have been bargaining about the rate of your ruin—

*Mel.* Like any two guardians to an orphan heiress—Well.

*Mask.* And whereas pleasure is generally paid with mischief, what mischief I do is to be paid with pleasure.

*Mel.* So when you've swallowed the potion, you sweeten your mouth with a plumb.

*Mask.* You are merry, Sir, but I shall probe your constitution. In short, the price of your banishment is to be paid with the person of—

*Mel.* Of Cynthia, and her fortune—Why you forget you told me this before.

*Mask.* No, no—So far you are right; and I am, as an earnest of that bargain, to have full and free possession of the person of—your aunt.

*Mel.* Ha!—Pho, you trifle.

*Mask.* By this light, I am serious; all raillery apart—I knew 'twould stun you:—This evening at eight she will receive me in her bed-chamber.

*Mel.* Hell and the Devil, is she abandoned of all grace—Why the woman is possessed—

*Mask.* Well, will you go in my stead?

*Mel.* By Heaven into a hot furnace sooner.

*Mask.*

*Mask.* No, you would not—it would not be so convenient, as I can order matters.

*Mel.* What do ye mean?

*Mask.* Mean? Not to disappoint the lady, I assure you—Ha, ha, ha, how gravely he looks—Come, come, I won't perplex you. 'Tis the only thing that Providence could have contrived to make me capable of serving you, either to my inclination or your own necessity.

*Mel.* How, how, for Heaven's sake, dear Maskwell?

*Mask.* Why thus—I'll go according to appointment; you shall have notice at the critical minute to come and surprize your aunt and me together; counterfeit a rage against me, and I will make my escape through the private passage from her chamber, which I'll take care to leave open: 'twill be hard, if then you can't bring her to any conditions. For this discovery will disarm her of all defence, and leave her entirely at your mercy: nay, she must ever after be in awe of you.

*Mel.* Let me adore thee, my better genius! By Heaven I think it is not in the power of Fate to disappoint my hopes—My hopes, my certainty!

*Mask.* Well, I'll meet you here within a quarter of eight, and give you notice. [Exit.

*Mel.* Good fortune ever go along with thee.

*Enter Careless.*

*Care.* Mellefont, get out of the way, my Lady Plyant's coming, and I shall never succeed while thou art in sight—Tho' she begins to tack about; but I made love a great while to no purpose.

*Mel.* Why, what's the matter? She is convinced that I don't care for her.

*Care.* I cannot get an answer from her that does not begin with her honour, or her virtue, her religion, or some such cant. Then she has told me the whole story of Sir Paul's nine years courtship; how he has lain for whole nights together upon the stairs before her chamber-door; and that the first favour he received from her was a piece of an old scarlet petticoat for a stomacher; which, since the day of his marriage, he has, out of a piece of gallantry, converted into a night-cap, and wears it still with much solemnity on his anniversary wedding night.

*Mel.* That I have seen, with the ceremony thereunto belonging—For on that night he creeps in at the bed's feet, like a gulled Bassa that has married a relation of the Grand Signior, ' and that night he has his arms at liberty. Did she not tell you at what a distance she keeps him? He has confessed to me, that but at some certain times, that is, I suppose, when she apprehends being with child, he never has the privilege of using the familiarity of a husband with a wife. He was once given to scrambling with his hands, and sprawling in his sleep, and ever since she has swaddled him up in blankets, and his hands and feet swathed down, and so put to bed; and there he lies with a great beard, like a Russian bear upon a drift of snow. You are very great with him,' I wonder he never told you his grievances; he will, I warrant you.

*Care.* Excessively foolish!—But that which gives me most hopes of her, is her telling me of the many temptations she has resisted.

*Mel.* Nay, then you have her; for a woman's bragging to a man that she has overcome temptations, is an argument that they were weakly offered, and a challenge to him to engage her more irresistibly. 'Tis only an enhancing the price of the commodity, by telling you how many customers have underbid her.

*Care.* Nay, I don't despair—But still she has a grudging to you—I talked to her t'other night at my Lord Froth's masquerade, when I am satisfied she knew me, and I had no reason to complain of my reception; but I find women are not the same bare-faced and in masks—and a vizor disguises their inclinations as much as their faces.

*Mel.* 'Tis a mistake; for women may most properly be said to be unmasked when they wear vizors; for that secures them from blushing, and being out of countenance, and next to being in the dark, or alone, they are most truly themselves in a vizor-mask.' Here they come. I'll leave you. Ply her close, and by and by clap a *billet-doux* into her hand: for a woman never thinks a man truly in love with her 'till he has been fool enough to think of her out of her sight, and to lose so much time as to write to her.

[*Exit.*  
*Enter*

*Enter Sir Paul and Lady Plyant.*

*Sir P.* Shan't we disturb your meditation, Mr. Careless? You would be in private?

*Care.* You bring that along with you, Sir Paul, that shall be always welcome to my privacy.

*Sir P.* O, sweet Sir, you load your humble servants, both me and my wife, with continual favours.

*L. P.* Sir Paul, what a phrase was there! You will be making answers, and taking that upon you which ought to lie upon me: that you should have so little breeding to think Mr. Careless did not apply himself to me. Pray, what have you to entertain any body's privacy? I swear and declare in the face of the world I'm ready to blush for your ignorance.

*Sir P.* I acquiesce, my Lady; but don't snub so loud.  
[*Aside to her.*]

*L. P.* Mr. Careless, if a person that is wholly illiterate might be supposed to be capable of being qualified to make a suitable return to those obligations which you are pleased to confer upon one that is wholly incapable of being qualified in all those circumstances, I am sure I should rather attempt it than any thing in the world, [*Courtesies.*] for I'm sure there's nothing in the world that I would rather. [*Courtesies.*] But I know Mr. Careless is so great a critic, and so fine a gentleman, that it is impossible for me—

*Care.* O Heavens! Madam, you confound me.

*Sir P.* Gads-bud, she's a fine person—

*L. P.* O lord! Sir, pardon me; we women have not these advantages: I know my own imperfections—but at the same time you must give me leave to declare in the face of the world that nobody is more sensible of favours and things; for, with the reserve of my honour, I assure you, Mr. Careless, I don't know any thing in the world I would refuse to a person so meritorious—  
You'll pardon my want of expression.

*Care.* O, your Ladyship is abounding in all excellence, particularly that of phrase.

*L. P.* You are so obliging, Sir.

*Care.* Your Ladyship is so charming.

*Sir P.* So, now, now; now, my Lady.

*L. P.* So well bred.

*Care.* So surprizing.

*L. P.* So well dress'd, so *bonne mien*, so eloquent, so unaffected, so easy, so free, so particular, so agreeable——

*Sir P.* Ay, so, so, there.

*Care.* O lord, I beseech you, Madam, don't——

*L. P.* So gay, so graceful, so good teeth, so fine shape, so fine limbs, so fine linen, and I don't doubt but you have a very good skin, Sir.

*Care.* For Heaven's sake, Madam——I am quite out of countenance.

*Sir P.* And my Lady's quite out of breath; or else you should hear—Gad's-bud, you may talk of my Lady Froth.

*Care.* O fy, fy, not to be named of a day---My Lady Froth is very well in her accomplishments——but it is when my Lady Plyant is not thought of——If that can ever be.

*L. P.* O, you overcome me——That is so excessive.

*Sir P.* Nay, I swear and vow that was pretty.

*Care.* O, Sir Paul, you are the happiest man alive. Such a lady! that is the envy of her own sex, and the admiration of ours.

*Sir P.* Your humble servant; I am, I thank Heaven, in a fine way of living, as I may say, peacefully and happily, and I think need not envy any of my neighbours, blessed be Providence——Ay, truly, Mr. Careless, my Lady is a great blessing, a fine, discreet, well-spoken woman as you shall see——if it becomes me to say so; and we live very comfortably together; she is a little hasty sometimes, and so am I; but mine's soon over, and then I am so sorry—O, Mr. Careless, if it were not for one thing——

*Enter Boy with a letter.*

*L. P.* How often have you been told of that, you jackanapes?

*Sir P.* Gad so, gads-bud——Tim, carry it to my Lady, you should have carried it to my Lady first.

*Boy.* 'Tis directed to your worship.

*Sir P.* Well, well, my Lady reads all letters first——Child, do so no more; d'ye hear, Tim.

*Boy.* No, and please you.

[*Exit.*

*Sir P.*

*Sir P.* A humour of my wife's; you know women have little fancies——But as I was telling you, Mr. Careless, if it were not for one thing, I should think myself the happiest man in the world; indeed that touches me near, very near.

*Care.* What can that be, Sir Paul?

*Sir P.* Why, I have, I thank Heaven, a very plentiful fortune, a good estate in the country, some houses in town, and some money, a pretty tolerable personal estate; and it is a great grief to me, indeed it is, Mr. Careless, that I have not a son to inherit this. 'Tis true, I have a daughter, and a fine dutiful child she is, though I say it, blessed be Providence I may say; for indeed, Mr. Careless, I am mightily beholden to Providence---A poor unworthy finner---But if I had a son, ah! that's my affliction, and my only affliction; indeed, I cannot refrain tears when it comes into my mind. [*Cries.*

*Care.* Why, methinks that might be easily remedied; my Lady is a fine likely woman.

*Sir P.* Oh, a fine likely woman as you shall see in a summer's day——Indeed she is, Mr. Careless, in all respects.

*Care.* And I should not have taken you to have been so old——

*Sir P.* Alas! that's not it, Mr. Careless: ah! that's not it; no, no, you shoot wide of the mark a mile; indeed you do; that's not it, Mr. Careless; no, no, that's not it.

*Care.* No, what can be the matter then?

*Sir P.* You'll scarcely believe me when I shall tell you——my Lady is so nice——It is very strange, but it is true: too true——she is so very nice, that I don't believe she would touch a man for the world.——'At least not above once a year; I am sure I have found it so; and 'alas, what's once a year to an old man, who would do good in his generation!' Indeed, it is true, Mr. Careless, it breaks my heart—I am her husband, as I may say; though far unworthy of that honour, yet I am her husband; but alas-a-day, I have no more familiarity with her person——'as to that matter'——than with my own mother——no indeed,

*Care.*

*Care.* Alas-a-day! this is a lamentable story; my Lady must be told on't; she must, i'faith, Sir Paul; 'tis an injury to the world.

*Sir P.* Ah! would to Heaven you would, Mr. Careless; you are mightily in her favour.

*Care.* I warrant you, what, we must have a son some way or other.

*Sir P.* Indeed, I should be mightily bound to you, if you could bring it about, Mr. Careless.

*L. P.* Here, Sir Paul, it is from your steward, here's a return of 600*l.* you may take fifty of it for the next half-year. [Gives him the letter.]

*Enter Lord Froth and Cynthia.*

*Sir P.* How does my girl? Come hither to thy father, poor lamb, thou art melancholic.

*Ld. F.* Heaven, Sir Paul, you amaze me of all things in the world—You are never pleased but when we are all upon the broad grin; all laugh and no company; ah! then 'tis such a sight to see some teeth—Sure you are a great admirer of my Lady Whifler, Mr. Sneer, and Sir Laurence Loud, and that gang.

*Sir P.* I vow and swear she is a very merry woman, but I think she laughs a little too much.

*Ld. F.* Merry! O lord, what a character that is of a woman of quality—You have been at my Lady Whifler's upon her day, Madam?

*Cyn.* Yes, my Lord—I must humour this fool. [Aside.]

*Ld. F.* Well and how? hee! What is your sense of the conversation?

*Cyn.* O, most ridiculous, a perpetual concert of laughing without any harmony; for sure, my Lord, to laugh out of time, is as disagreeable as to sing out of time or out of tune.

*Ld. F.* Hee, hee, hee, right; and then my Lady Whifler is so ready—she always comes in three bars too soon—And then, what do they laugh at? For you know laughing without a jest is as impertinent, hee! as——

*Cyn.* As dancing without a fiddle.

*Ld. F.* Just i'faith, that was at my tongue's end.

*Cyn.* But that cannot be properly said of them, for I think they are all in good nature with the world, and only laugh at one another; and you must allow they have



have all jests in their persons, though they have none in their conversation.

*Ld. F.* True, as I am a person of honour——For Heaven's sake let us sacrifice them to mirth a little.

[*Enter Boy and whispers Sir Paul.*]

*Sir P.* Gad so—Wife, Wife, my Lady Plyant, I have a word.

*L. P.* I am busy, Sir Paul, I wonder at your impertinence——

*Care.* Sir Paul, harkee, I am reasoning the matter you know: Madam, if your Ladyship please we'll discourse of this in the next room. [*Ex. Lady P. and Care.*]

*Sir P.* O ho, I wish you good success, I wish you good success. Boy, tell my Lady, when she has done, I would speak with her below. [*Exit Sir Paul.*]

*Enter Lady Froth and Brisk.*

*L. F.* Then you think that episode between Susan the dairy-maid, and our coachman, is not amiss; you know I may suppose the dairy in town, as well as in the country.

*Brisk.* Incomparable, let me perish—But then being an heroic poem, had you not better call him a Charioteer? Charioteer sounds great: besides your Ladyship's coachman having a red face, and you comparing him to the sun——And you know the sun is called Heaven's Charioteer.

*L. F.* Oh, infinitely better; I am extremely beholden to you for the hint; itay, we'll read over those half a score lines again. [*Pulls out a paper.*] Let me see here, you know what goes before——the comparison, you know. [*Reads.*]

For as the sun shines every day,  
So of our coachman I may say.

*Brisk.* I am afraid that simile won't do in wet weather——Because you say the sun shines every day.

*L. F.* No, for the sun it won't, but it will do for the coachman, for you know there's most occasion for a coach in wet weather.

*Brisk.* Right, right, that saves all.

*L. F.* Then I don't say the sun shines all the day, but that he peeps now and then, yet he does shine all the day too, you know, though we don't see him.

*Brisk.*

*Brisk.* Right, but the vulgar will never comprehend that.

*L. F.* Well, you shall hear—Let me see.

[*Reads.*] For as the sun shines every day,  
So of our coachman I may say;  
He shews his drunken fiery face,  
Just as the sun does, more or less.

*Brisk.* That's right, all's well, all's well. More or less.

*L. F.* [*Reads.*]

And when at night his labour's done,  
Then too, like Heaven's charioteer, the sun :  
Ay, Charioteer does better.

Into the dairy he descends,  
And there his whipping and his driving ends;  
There he's secure from danger of a bilk,  
His fare is paid him, and he sets in milk.

For Susan, you know, is Thetis, and so——

*Brisk.* Incomparable well and proper, 'egad—But I have one exception to make——Don't you think bilk (I know it is good rhyme) but don't you think bilk and fare too like a hackney coachman?

*L. F.* I swear and vow I am afraid so——And yet our Jehu was a hackney coachman when my Lord took him.

*Brisk.* Was he? I am answered, if Jehu was a hackney coachman—You may put that in the marginal notes tho' to prevent criticism—Only mark it with a small asterisk, and say—Jehu was formerly a hackney coachman.

*L. F.* I will; you'll oblige me extremely to write notes to the whole poem.

*Brisk.* With all my heart and soul, and proud of the vast honour, let me perish.

*Ld. F.* Hee, hee, hee, my dear, have you done?—Won't you join with us? we were laughing at my Lady Whifler and Mr. Sneer.

*L. F.* ——Ay, my dear——Were you? Oh filthy Mr. Sneer; he's a nauseous figure, a most fulfamic fop, foh——He spent two days together in going about Covent-Garden to suit the lining of his coach with his complexion.

*Ld. F.* O silly ! yet his aunt is as fond of him as if she had brought the ape into the world herself.

*Brisk.* Who, my Lady Toothless ; O, she's a mortifying spectacle ; she's always chewing the cud like an old ewe.

*Cyn.* Fy, Mr. Brisk, eringo is for her cough.

*L. F.* I have seen her take them half-chewed out of her mouth to laugh, and then put them in again—Foh.

*Ld. F.* Foh.

*L. F.* Then she is always ready to laugh when Sneer offers to speak—and sits in expectation of his no jest, with her gums bare, and her mouth open——

*Brisk.* Like an oyster at low ebb, 'egad—Ha, ha, ha.

*Cyn.* [*Aside.*] Well, I find there are no fools so inconsiderable in themselves, but they can render other people contemptible by exposing their infirmities.'

*L. F.* Then that t'other great strapping lady—I cannot hit of her name ; the old fat fool that paints so exorbitantly.

*Brisk.* I know whom you mean—But deuce take me, I cannot hit of her name neither——Paints, d'ye say ? Why, she lays it on with a trowel——Then she has a great beard that bristles through it, and makes her look as if she were plaistered with lime and hair, let me perish.

*L. F.* Oh, you made a song upon her, Mr. Brisk.

*Brisk.* He ! 'egad, so I did——My Lord can sing it.

*Cyn.* O good, my Lord, let us hear it.'

*Brisk.* 'Tis not a song neither——It is a sort of an epigram, or rather an epigrammatic sonnet ; I don't know what to call it, but it is satire.—' Sing it, my Lord.'

*Lord Froth sings.*

Ancient Phillis has young graces,  
'Tis a strange thing, but a true one ;  
Shall I tell you how ?  
She herself makes her own faces,  
And each morning wears a new one ?  
Where's the wonder now ?

*Brisk.* Short, but there is salt in it ; my way of writing, 'egad.

*Enter Footman.*

*L. F.* How now?

*Foot.* Your Ladyship's chair is come.

*L. F.* Is nurse and the child in it?

*Foot.* Yes, Madam.

[*Exit.*

*L. F.* O, the dear creature! let us go see it.

*Ld. F.* I swear, my dear, you'll spoil that child with sending it to and again so often; this is the seventh time the chair has gone for her to-day.

*L. F.* O-la, I swear it's but the sixth—and I han't seen her these two hours——The poor dear creature——I swear, my Lord, you don't love poor little Sappho,——Come, my dear Cynthia, Mr. Brisk, we'll go see Sappho, though my Lord won't.

*Cyn.* I'll wait upon your Ladyship.

*Brisk.* Pray, Madam, how old is Lady Sappho?

*L. F.* Three quarters, but I swear she has a world of wit, and can sing a tune already. My Lord, won't you go? Won't you? What, not to see Saph? Pray, my Lord, come see little Saph. I knew you could not stay.

[*Exeunt all but Cynthia.*

' *Cyn.* 'Tis not so hard to counterfeit joy in the  
' depth of affliction, as to dissemble mirth in the com-  
' pany of fools——Why should I call them fools? The  
' world thinks better of them; for these have quality  
' and education, wit and fine conversation, are received  
' and admired by the world——If not, they like and  
' admire themselves——And why is not that true wis-  
' dom, for it is happiness? And for ought I know, we  
' have misapplied the name all this while, and mistaken  
' the thing: since

' If happiness in self-content is plac'd,

' The wise are wretched, and fools only blest'd.

[*Exit.*

END of the THIRD ACT.

A C T IV.

' *Enter Mellefont and Cynthia.*

' CYNTHIA.

' **I** Heard him loud as I came by the closet-door, and  
' my Lady with him; but she seem'd to moderate  
' his passion.

*Alc.*

‘ *Mel.* Ay, Hell thank her, as gentle breezes moderate  
 ‘ a fire; but I shall counter-work her spells, and ride  
 ‘ the witch in her own bridle.

‘ *Cyn.* It is impossible; she’ll cast beyond you still——  
 ‘ I’ll lay my life it will never be a match.

‘ *Mel.* What?

‘ *Cyn.* Between you and me.

‘ *Mel.* Why so?

‘ *Cyn.* My mind gives me it won’t——because we are  
 ‘ both willing; we each of us strive to reach the goal,  
 ‘ and hinder one another in the race; I swear it never  
 ‘ does well when parties are so agreed—For when people  
 ‘ walk hand in hand, there’s neither overtaking nor  
 ‘ meeting: we hunt in couples where we both pursue  
 ‘ the same game, but forget one another; and ’tis be-  
 ‘ cause we are so near that we don’t think of coming to-  
 ‘ gether.

‘ *Mel.* Hum, ’egad I believe there’s something in it—  
 ‘ Marriage is the game that we hunt, and while we  
 ‘ think that we only have it in view, I don’t see but  
 ‘ we have it in our power.

‘ *Cyn.* Within reach; for example, give me your  
 ‘ hand; you have looked through the wrong end of the  
 ‘ perspective all this while; for nothing has been be-  
 ‘ tween us but our fears.

‘ *Mel.* I don’t know why we should not steal out of  
 ‘ the house this very moment, and marry one another,  
 ‘ without consideration, or the fear of repentance: Pox  
 ‘ o’fortune, portion, settlements, and jointures.

‘ *Cyn.* Ay, ay, what have we to do with them; you  
 ‘ know we marry for love.

‘ *Mel.* Love, love, downright very villainous love.

‘ *Cyn.* And he that cannot live upon love deserves to  
 ‘ die in a ditch.—Here then, I give you my promise,  
 ‘ in spite of duty, any temptation of wealth, your in-  
 ‘ constancy, or my own inclination to change——

‘ *Mel.* To run most wilfully and unreasonably away  
 ‘ with me this moment, and be married.

‘ *Cyn.* Hold—Never to marry any body else.

‘ *Mel.* That’s but a kind of negative consent—Why,  
 ‘ you won’t baulk the frolic?

‘ *Cyn.* If you had not been so assured of your own conduct I would not—— But ’tis but reasonable that since I consent to like a man without the vile consideration of money, he should give me a very evident demonstration of his wit: therefore, let me see you undermine my Lady Touchwood, as you boasted, and force her to give her consent, and then——

‘ *Mel.* I’ll do it.

‘ *Cyn.* And I’ll do it.

‘ *Mel.* This very next ensuing hour of eight o’clock, is the last minute of her reign, unless the Devil assist her in *propria persona*.

‘ *Cyn.* Well, if the Devil should assist her, and your plot miscarry.——

‘ *Mel.* Ay, what am I to trust to then ?

‘ *Cyn.* Why, if you give me very clear demonstration that it was the Devil, I will allow for irresistible odds. But if I find it to be only chance, or destiny, or unlucky stars, or any thing but the very Devil, I am inexorable: only still I’ll keep my word, and live a maid for your sake.

‘ *Mel.* And you won’t die one for your own, so still there’s hope.

‘ *Cyn.* Here is my mother-in-law, and your friend Careless, I would not have them see us together yet.

‘ [*Exeunt.*’

*Enter Careless and Lady Plyant.\**

*L. P.* I swear, Mr. Careless, you are very alluring—and say so many fine things, and nothing is so moving to me as a fine thing. Well, I must do you this justice, and declare in the face of the world, never any body gained so far upon me as yourself; with blushes I must own it, you have shaken, as I may say, the very foundation of my honour—Well, sure if I escape your importunities, I shall value myself as long as I live, I swear.

*Care.* And despise me.

[*Sighing.*

*L. P.* The last of any man in the world, by my purity; now you make me swear—O, gratitude forbid that I should ever be wanting in a respectful acknowledgment of an entire resignation of all my best wishes for the per-

\* The fourth act, in representation, begins here.

son and parts of so accomplished a person, whose merit challenges much more, I am sure, than my illiterate praises can description.——

*Care.* [*In a whining tone.*] Ah, Heavens, Madam, you ruin me with kindness; your charming tongue pursues the victory of your eyes, while at your feet your poor adorer dies.

*L. P.* Ah! very fine.

*Care.* [*Still whining.*] Ah, why are you so fair, so bewitching fair? O, let me grow to the ground here, and feast upon that hand; O, let me press it to my heart, my trembling heart, the nimble movement shall instruct your pulse, and teach it to alarm desire.—Zoons I am almost at the end of my cant, if she does not yield quickly.

[*Aside.*]

*L. P.* O that's so passionate and fine, I cannot hear it—I am not safe if I stay, and must leave you.

*Care.* And must you leave me! Rather let me languish out a wretched life, and breathe my soul beneath your feet.——I must say the same thing over again, and cannot help it.

[*Aside.*]

*L. P.* I swear I am ready to languish too——O my honour! Whither is it going? I protest you have given me the palpitation of the heart.

*Care.* Can you be so cruel?

*L. P.* O rise, I beseech you, say no more 'till you rise—Why did you kneel so long? I swear I was so transported I did not see it——Well, to shew you how far you have gained upon me, I assure you, if Sir Paul should die, of all mankind there's none I'd sooner make my second choice.

*Care.* O Heaven! I cannot out-live this night without your favour——I feel my spirits faint, a general dampness over-spreads my face, a cold deadly dew already vents through all my pores, and will to-morrow wash me for ever from your sight, and drown me in my tomb.

*L. P.* O, you have conquered, sweet, melting, moving Sir, you have conquered—What heart of marble can refrain to weep, and yield to such sad sayings.—

[*Cries.*]

*Care.* I thank Heaven, they are the saddest that I ever said—Oh! 'I shall never contain laughter.'

[*Aside.*]

*L. P.* Oh, I yield myself all up to your uncontrollable embraces——Say, thou dear dying man, when, where, and how?——‘ Ah, there’s Sir Paul.’

*Care.* ‘Slife, yonder’s Sir Paul, but if he were not come, I am so transported I cannot speak—— This note will inform you. [Gives her a note. Exit.

*Enter Sir Paul and Cynthia.*

*Sir P.* Thou art my tender lambkin, and shalt do what thou wilt—But endeavour to forget this Mellefont.

*Cyn.* I would obey you to my power, Sir; but if I have not him, I have sworn never to marry.

*Sir P.* Never to marry! Heavens forbid! Must I neither have sons nor grandsons? Must the family of the Plyants be utterly extinct for want of issue male. Oh, impiety! But did you swear, did that sweet creature swear! ha? How durst you swear without my consent, ah? Gads-bud, who am I?

*Cyn.* Pray don’t be angry, Sir; when I swore I had your consent, and therefore I swore.

*Sir P.* Why then the revoking my consent does annul, or make of none effect your oath; so you may unswear it again——The law will allow it.

*Cyn.* Ay, but my conscience never will.

*Sir P.* Gads-bud, no matter for that; conscience and law never go together; you must not expect that.

*L. P.* Ay, but Sir Paul, I conceive if she has sworn, d’ye mark me, if she has oncè sworn, it is most unchristian, inhuman, and obscene that she should break it.—— I’ll make up the match again, because Mr. Careless said it would oblige him. [Aside.

*Sir P.* Does your Ladyship conceive so?—— Why, I was of that opinion once too——Nay, if your Ladyship conceives so, I am of that opinion again; but I can neither find my Lord nor my Lady, to know what they intend.

*L. P.* I am satisfied that my cousin Mellefont has been much wronged.

*Cyn.* [Aside.] I am amazed to find her of our side, for I am sure she loved him.

*L. P.* I know my Lady Touchwood has no kindness for him; and besides, I have been informed by Mr. Careless, that Mellefont had never any thing more than a pro-



a profound respect—That he has owned himself to be my admirer, 'tis true, but he was never so presumptuous to entertain any dishonourable notions of things; so that if this be made plain—I don't see how my daughter can in conscience, or honour, or any thing in the world —

*Sir P.* Indeed if this be made plain, as my Lady your mother says, child —

*L. P.* Plain! I was informed of it by Mr. Careless— And I assure you Mr. Careless is a person—that has a most extraordinary respect and honour for you, Sir Paul.

*Cyn.* [*Aside.*] And for your Ladyship too, I believe, or else you had not changed sides so soon; now I begin to find it.

*Sir P.* I am much obliged to Mr. Careless, really, he is a person that I have a great value for, not only for that, but because he has a great veneration for your Ladyship.

*L. P.* O la, no indeed, Sir Paul, it is upon your account.

*Sir P.* No, I protest and vow I have no title to his esteem, but in having the honour to appertain in some measure to your Ladyship, that's all.

*L. P.* O la, now, I swear and declare, it shan't be so, you are too modest, Sir Paul.

*Sir P.* It becomes me, when there is any comparison made between —

*L. P.* O fy, fy, Sir Paul, you'll put me out of countenance—Your very obedient and affectionate wife, that's all—And highly honoured in that title.

*Sir P.* Gads-bud I am transported! Give me leave to kiss your Ladyship's hand.

*Cyn.* That my poor father should be so very silly!  
[*Aside.*]

*L. P.* My lip, indeed, Sir Paul, I swear you shall.  
[*He kisses her, and bows very low.*]

*Sir P.* I humbly thank your Ladyship—I don't know whether I fly on ground, or walk in air—Gads-bud, she was never thus before—Well, I must own myself beholden to Mr. Careless—As sure as can be this is all his doing—something that he has said; well, 'tis a rare thing to have an ingenious friend. Well, your Ladyship is of opinion that the match may go forward.

*L. P.* By all means—Mr. Careless has satisfied me of the matter.

*Sir P.* Well, why then, lamb, you may keep your oath, but have a care of making rash vows; come hither to me, and kiss papa.

*L. P.* I swear and declare, I am in such a twitter to read Mr. Careless's letter, that I cannot forbear any longer—But though I may read all letters first by prerogative, yet I'll be sure to be unsuspected this time.—  
Sir Paul.

*Sir P.* Did your Ladyship call?

*L. P.* Nay, not to interrupt you, my dear—Only lend me your letter, which you had from your steward to-day: I would look upon the account again; and may be increase the allowance.

*Sir P.* There it is, Madam. Do you want a pen and ink?

[*Bows and gives the letter.*]

*L. P.* No, no, nothing else, I thank you, Sir Paul—So now I can read my own letter under the cover of his.

[*Aside.*]

*Sir P.* He? and wilt thou bring a grandson at nine months end---He? A brave chopping boy.—I'll settle a thousand pounds a year upon the rogue as soon as ever he looks me in the face, I will Gads-bud. I am overjoyed to think I have any of my family that will bring children into the world. For I would fain have some resemblance of myself in my posterity, he, Thy! 'Canst not you contrive that affair, girl? Do; Gads-bud 'think on thy old father;' heh! Make the young rogue as like as you can.

*Cyn.* I am glad to see you so merry, Sir.

*Sir P.* Merry! Gads-bud I am serious! I'll give thee 500l. for every inch of him that resembles me; ah, this eye, this left eye! A thousand pounds for this left eye. This has done execution in its time, girl; why, thou hast my leer, huffy, just thy father's leer.—Let it be transmitted to the young rogue by the help of imagination----Why 'tis the mark of our family, Thy; our house is distinguished by a languishing eye, as the house of Austria is by a thick lip—Ah! when I was of your age, huffy, I would have held fifty to one I could have drawn my own picture—Gads-bud, but I could have done—

not

not so much as you neither, — but ———— nay, don't blush ————

*Cyn.* I don't blush, Sir, for I vow I don't understand.

*Sir P.* Pshaw, pshaw, you fib, you baggage, you do understand, and you shall understand: Come, don't be so nice; Gads-bud don't learn after your mother-in-law, my Lady here — Marry Heaven forbid that you should follow her example, that would spoil all indeed. Bless us, if you should take a vagary, and make a rash resolution on your wedding-night to die a maid, as she did, all were ruined, all my hopes lost ———— My heart would break, and my estate would be left to the wide world, he! I hope you are a better Christian than to think of living; a nun, he? Answer me.

*Cyn.* I am all obedience, Sir, to your commands.

*L. P.* [*Having read the letter.*] O dear Mr. Careless, I swear he writes charmingly, and he looks charmingly, and he has charmed me as much as I have charmed him; and so I'll tell him in the wardrobe when 'tis dark. O Crimine! I hope Sir Paul has not seen both letters ———— [*Puts the wrong letter hastily up, and gives him her own.*] Sir Paul, here's your letter, to-morrow morning I'll settle accounts to your advantage.

*Enter Brisk.*

*Brisk.* Sir Paul, Gad's-bud you are an uncivil person, let me tell you, and all that; and I did not think it had been in you.

*Sir P.* O la; what's the matter now? I hope you are not angry, Mr. Brisk?

*Brisk.* Deuce take me, I believe you intend to marry your daughter yourself; you are always brooding over her like an old hen, as if she were not well hatched, 'egad, he?

*Sir P.* Good strange! Mr. Brisk is such a merry facetious person, he, he, he. No, no, I have done with her, I have done with her now.

*Brisk.* The fiddles have stayed this hour in the hall, and my Lord Froth wants a partner; we can never begin without her.

*Sir P.* Go, go, child, go, get you gone and dance, and be merry; I will come and look at you by and by. ———— Where is my son Mellefont?

*L. P.*

*L. P.* I'll send him to them, I know where he is —

*Brisk.* Sir Paul, will you send Careless into the hall if you meet him.

*Sir P.* I will, I will, I'll go and look for him on purpose. [*Ex. all but Brisk.*]

*Brisk.* So now they are all gone, and I have an opportunity to practise—Ah! my dear Lady Froth! She's a most engaging creature, if she were not so fond of that damned coxcomby Lord of hers; and yet I am forced to allow him wit too, to keep in with him—No matter, she's a woman of parts, and 'egad parts will carry her. She said, she would follow me into the gallery—Now to make my approaches—Hem, hem! Ah, Ma- [*Bows.*] dam!—Pox on't, why should I disparage my parts by thinking what to say; None but dull rogues *think*: witty men, like rich fellows, are always ready for all expences, while your blockheads, like poor needy scoundrels, are forced to examine their stock, and forecast the charges of the day. Here she comes; I'll seem not to see her, and try to win her with a new airy invention of my own, hem!

*Enter Lady Froth.*

[*Brisk sings, walking about.*] I'm sick with love, ha, ha, ha, pr'ythee come cure me.

I'm sick with, &c.

O ye powers! O my Lady Froth, my Lady Froth! My Lady Froth! Heigho! Break heart; Gods I thank you.

[*Stands musing with his arms across.*]

*L. F.* O Heavens, Mr. Brisk! What's the matter?

*Brisk.* My Lady Froth! Your Ladyship's most humble servant—The matter, Madam? Nothing, Madam, nothing at all 'egad. I was fallen into the most agreeable amusement in the whole province of contemplation: That is all—(I'll seem to conceal my passion, and that will look like respect.) [*Afide.*]

*L. F.* Bless me, why did you call out upon me so loud?—

*Brisk.* O lord, I Madam! I beseech your Ladyship—When?

*L. F.* Just now as I came in; bless me, why don't you know it?

*Brisk.*

*Brisk.* Not I, let me perish—But did I? Strange! I confess your Ladyship was in my thoughts; and I was in a sort of dream that did in a manner represent a very pleasing object to my imagination, but—but did I indeed?—To see how love and murder will out. But did I really name my Lady Froth?

*L. F.* Three times aloud, as I love letters—But did you talk of love? O Parnassus! Who would have thought Mr. Brisk could have been in love, ha, ha, ha. O Heavens! I thought you could have no mistress but the nine muses.

*Brisk.* No more I have, 'egad, for I adore them all in your Ladyship—Let me perish, I don't know whether to be splenetic or airy upon it; the deuce take me if I can tell whether I am glad or sorry that your Ladyship has made the discovery.

*L. F.* O, be merry by all means—Prince Volscius in love! Ha, ha, ha.

*Brisk.* O, barbarous, to turn me into ridicule! Yet, ha, ha, ha. The deuce take me, I cannot help laughing myself, ha, ha, ha; yet by Heavens I have a violent passion for your Ladyship seriously.

*L. F.* Seriously! Ha, ha, ha.

*Brisk.* Seriously, ha, ha, ha. Gad I have for all I laugh.

*L. F.* Ha, ha, ha! What d'ye think I laugh at? Ha, ha, ha.

*Brisk.* Me 'egad, ha ha.

*L. F.* No, the deuce take me if I don't laugh at myself; for hang me if I have not a violent passion for Mr. Brisk, ha, ha, ha.

*Brisk.* Seriously?

*L. F.* Seriously, ha, ha, ha.

*Brisk.* That's well enough, let me perish, ha, ha, ha. O miraculous, what a happy discovery! Ay, my dear charming Lady Froth!

*L. F.* Oh, my adored Mr. Brisk! [Embrace.]

*Enter Lord Froth.*

*Ld. F.* The company are all ready—How now!

*Brisk.* Zoons, Madam, there's my Lord. [*Softly to her.*]

*L. F.* Take no notice—but observe me—Now cast off, and meet me at the lower end of the room, and then

then join hands again; I could teach my Lord this dance purely, but I vow, Mr. Brisk, I can't tell how to come so near any other man. Oh, here's my Lord, now you shall see me do it with him.

[*They pretend to practise part of a country dance.*]

*Ld. F.* —Oh, I see there's no harm yet—But I don't like this familiarity. [*Aside.*]

*L. F.* —Shall you and I do our close dance, to shew Mr. Brisk?

*Ld. F.* No, my dear, do it with him.

*L. F.* I'll do it with him, my Lord, when you are out of the way.

*Brisk.* That's good 'egad, that's good; deuce take me I can hardly hold laughing in his face. [*Aside.*]

*Ld. F.* Any other time, my dear, or we'll dance it below.

*L. F.* With all my heart.

*Brisk.* Come, my Lord, I'll wait on you—My charming witty angel! [*To her.*]

*L. F.* We shall have whispering time enough, you know, since we are partners. [*Exeunt.*]

*Enter Lady Plyant and Careless.*

*L. P.* O Mr. Careless, Mr. Careless, I'm ruined, I'm undone.

*Care.* What's the matter, Madam?

*L. P.* O the unluckiest accident, I'm afraid I shan't live to tell it you.

*Care.* Heaven forbid! What is it?

*L. P.* I'm in such a fright; the strangest quandary and premunire! I'm all over in an universal agitation, I dare swear every circumstance of me trembles.—O your letter, your letter! By an unfortunate mistake, I have given Sir Paul your letter instead of his own.

*Care.* That was unlucky.

*L. P.* O yonder he comes reading of it, for Heaven's sake step in here and advise me quickly, before he sees.

[*Exeunt.*]

*Enter Sir Paul with the letter.*

*Sir P.* —O Providence, what a conspiracy have I discovered—But let me see to make an end on't—

[*Reads.*] Hum—*After supper in the wardrobe by the gallery. If Sir Paul should surprize us, I have a commission from*

*from him to treat with you about the very matter of fact—*  
 Matter of fact! Very pretty; it seems, then, I am con-  
 ducting to my own cuckoldom; why this is a very trait-  
 erous position of taking up arms by my authority against  
 my person! Well, let me see—'Till then I languish in ex-  
 pectation of my adored charmer.

*Dying Ned Careless.*

Gads-bud, would that were matter of fact too. Die and  
 be damned for a Judas Maccabeus and Iscariot both. O  
 friendship, what art thou but a name! Henceforward  
 let no man make a friend that would not be a cuckold:  
 for whomsoever he receives into his bosom, will find the  
 way to his bed, and there return his careffes with interest  
 to his wife. 'Have I for this been pinioned night after  
 'night for three years past? Have I been swathed in  
 'blankets 'till I have been even deprived of motion?'  
 Have I approached the marriage-bed with reverence, as  
 to a sacred shrine, 'and denied myself the enjoyment of  
 'lawful domestic pleasures to preserve its purity,' and  
 must I now find it polluted by foreign iniquity? O my  
 Lady Plyant, you were chaste as ice, but you are melted  
 now, and false as water.—But Providence has been  
 constant to me in discovering this conspiracy; still I am  
 beholden to Providence; if it were not for Providence,  
 sure, poor Sir Paul, thy heart would break.

*Enter Lady Plyant.*

*L. P.* So, Sir, I see you have read the letter—Well,  
 now, Sir Paul, what do you think of your friend Care-  
 less? Has he been treacherous, or did you give his inso-  
 lence a licence to make trial of your wife's suspected vir-  
 tue? D'ye see here? [*Snatches the letter as in anger.*]  
 Look, read it! Gad's my life, if I thought it were so, I  
 would this moment renounce all communication with  
 you. Ungrateful monster! He? Is it so? Ay, I see it,  
 a plot upon my honour; your guilty cheeks confess it:  
 Oh, where shall wronged virtue fly for reparation! I'll  
 be divorced this instant.

*Sir P.* Gads-bud, what shall I say? This is the stran-  
 gest surprize! Why I don't know any thing at all, nor I  
 don't know whether there be any thing at all in the world,  
 or no.

*L. P.* I thought I should try you, false man. I that never disssembled in my life; yet to make trial of you, pretended to like that monster of iniquity, Careless, and found out that contrivance to let you see this letter; which now I find was of your own inditing—— I do, Heathen, I do; see my face no more; ‘I’ll be divorced presently.’

*Sir P.* O strange, what will become of me!——I am so amazed, and so overjoyed, so afraid, and so sorry.——But did you give me this letter on purpose, he? Did you?

*L. P.* Did I? Do you doubt me, Turk, Saracen? I have a cousin that’s a proctor in the Commons, I’ll go to him instantly——

*Sir P.* Hold, stay, I beseech your Ladyship——I am so overjoyed, stay, I’ll confess all.

*L. P.* What will you confess, Jew?

*Sir P.* Why now as I hope to be saved, I had no hand in this letter—Nay, hear me, I beseech your Ladyship: The Devil take me now if he did not go beyond my commission——If I desired him to do any more than speak a good word only just for me; Gads-bud, only for poor Sir Paul, I am an Anabaptist, or a Jew, or what you please to call me.

*L. P.* Why, is not here matter of fact?

*Sir P.* Ay, but by your own virtue and continency that matter of fact is all his own doing.—I confess I had a great desire to have some honours conferred upon me, which lie all in your Ladyship’s breast, and he being a well-spoken man, I desired him to intercede for me.——

*L. P.* Did you so, Presumption! ‘Oh! he comes, the Tarquin comes; I cannot bear his sight.’ [Exit.

*Enter Careless.*

*Care.* Sir Paul, I am glad I have met with you; ’egad I have said all I could, but cannot prevail——Then my friendship to you has carried me a little further in this matter——

*Sir P.* Indeed——Well, Sir—I’ll disssemble with him a little. [Aside.

*Care.* Why, faith, I have in my time known honest gentlemen abused by a pretended coyness in their wives, and I had a mind to try my Lady’s virtue——And when I could



could not prevail for you, 'egad I pretended to be in love myself—but all in vain, she would not hear a word upon that subject; then I writ a letter to her; I don't know what effects that will have, but I'll be sure to tell you when I do; though, by this light, I believe her virtue is impregnable.

*Sir P.* O Providence! Providence! What discoveries are here made! Why, this is better and more miraculous than the rest.

*Care.* What do you mean?

*Sir P.* I cannot tell you, I am so overjoyed; come along with me to my Lady, I cannot contain myself; come my dear friend.

*Care.* So, so, so, this difficulty's over. [*Aside.*  
[*Exit.*

*Enter Mellefont and Maskwell from different doors.*

*Mel.* Maskwell, I have been looking for you—It is within a quarter of eight.

*Mask.* My Lady is just gone into my Lord's closet, you had best steal into her chamber before she comes, and lie concealed there, otherwise she may lock the door when we are together, and you not easily get in to surprize us.

*Mel.* He? You say true.

*Mask.* You had best make haste, for after she has made some apology to the company for her own and my Lord's absence all this while, she'll retire to her chamber instantly.

*Mel.* I go this moment: Now, Fortune, I defy thee. [*Exit.*

*Mask.* I confess you may be allowed to be secure in your own opinion; the appearance is very fair, but I have an after-game to play that shall turn the tables, and here comes the man that I must manage.

*Enter Lord Touchwood.*

*Ld. T.* Maskwell, you are the man I wished to meet.

*Mask.* I am happy to be in the way of your Lordship's commands.

*Ld. T.* I have always found you prudent and careful in any thing that has concerned me or my family.

*Mask.* I were a villain else—I am bound by duty and

gratitude, and my own inclination, to be ever your Lordship's servant.

*Ld. T.* Enough — You are my friend; I know it: Yet there has been a thing in your knowledge which has concerned me nearly, that you have concealed from me.

*Mask.* My Lord!

*Ld. T.* Nay, I excuse your friendship to my unnatural nephew thus far — But I know you have been privy to his impious designs upon my wife. This evening she has told me all: her good-nature concealed it as long as was possible; but he perseveres so in villainy, that she has told me even you were weary of dissuading him, tho' you have once actually hindered him from forcing her.

*Mask.* I am sorry, my Lord, I cannot make you an answer; this is an occasion in which I would not willingly be silent.

*Ld. T.* I know you would excuse him — And I know as well that you cannot.

*Mask.* Indeed I was in hopes it had been but a youthful heat that might have soon boiled over; but —

*Ld. T.* Say on.

*Mask.* I have nothing more to say, my Lord — but to express my concern; for I think his frenzy increases daily.

*Ld. T.* How! give me but proof of it, ocular proof, that I may justify my dealing with him to the world, and share my fortunes.

*Mask.* O' my Lord! consider that is hard: besides, time may work upon him: then, for me to do it! I have professed an everlasting friendship to him.

*Ld. T.* He is your friend, and what an I?

*Mask.* I am answered.

*Ld. T.* Fear not his displeasure; I will put you out of his and Fortune's power; and for that thou art scrupulously honest, I will secure thy fidelity to him, and give my honour never to own any discovery that you shall make me. Can you give me a demonstrative proof? Speak.

*Mask.* I wish I could not — To be plain, my Lord, I intended this evening to have tried all arguments to dissuade him from a design, which I suspect; and if I had

not succeeded, to have informed your Lordship of what I knew.

*Ld. T.* I thank you. What is the villain's purpose?

*Mask.* He has owned nothing to me of late, and what I mean now is only a bare suspicion of my own. If your Lordship will meet me a quarter of an hour hence there, in that lobby by my Lady's bed-chamber, I shall be able to tell you more.

*Ld. T.* I will.

*Mask.* My duty to your Lordship makes me do a severe piece of justice.

*Ld. T.* I will be secret, and reward your honesty beyond your hopes. [*Exeunt*]

SCENE opening, *shews Lady Touchwood's chamber.*

*Mellefont solus.*

*Mel.* Pray Heaven my aunt keep touch with her affliction.—Oh, that her Lord were but sweating behind this hanging, with the expectation of what I shall see—Hist, she comes—Little does she think what a mine is just ready to spring under her feet. But to my post.

[*Goes behind the hangings.*]

*Enter Lady Touchwood.*

*L. T.* 'Tis eight o'clock: methinks I should have found him here—Who does not prevent the hour of love, outstays the time; for to be duly punctual is too slow.—I was accusing you of neglect.

*Enter Maskwell.*

*Mellefont absconding.*

*Mask.* I confess you do reproach me when I see you here before me; but 'tis fit I should be still behind-hand, still to be more and more indebted to your goodness.

*L. T.* You can excuse a fault too well, not to have been to blame——A ready answer shews you were prepared.

*Mask.* Guilt is ever at a loss, and confusion waits upon it; when innocence and bold truth are always ready for expression——

*L. T.* Not in love; words are the weak support of cold indifference; love has no language to be heard.

*Mask.* Excess of joy has made me stupid! Thus may my lips be ever closed. [*Kisses her.*] And thus—Oh, who

would not lose his speech upon condition to have joys above it!

*L. T.* Hold, let me lock the door first.

[*Goes to the door.*]

*Mask.* [*Aside.*] That I believed; 'twas well I left the private passage open.

*L. T.* So, that's safe.

*Mask.* And so may all your pleasures be, and secret as this kiss——

*Mel.* And may all treachery be thus discovered.

[*Leaps out.*]

*L. T.* Ah!

[*Scrieks.*]

*Mel.* Villain!

[*Offers to draw.*]

*Mask.* Nay then, there's but one way. [*Runs out.*]

*Mel.* Say you so, were you provided for an escape? Hold, Madam, you have no more holes to your burrow, I stand between you and this fally-port.

*L. T.* Thunder strike thee dead for this deceit, immediate lightning blast thee, me, and the whole world—— Oh! I could rack myself, play the vulture to my own heart, and gnaw it piece-meal, for not boding to me this misfortune.

*Mel.* Be patient——

'*L. T.* Be damned.'

*Mel.* Consider I have you on the hook; you will but flounder yourself a weary, and be nevertheless my prisoner.

*L. T.* I'll hold my breath and die, but I'll be free.

*Mel.* O Madam, have a care of dying unprepared, I doubt that you have some unrepented sins that may hang heavy, and retard your flight.

*L. T.* Oh! what shall I do? say? Whither shall I turn? Has Hell no remedy?

*Mel.* None. Hell has served you even as Heaven has done, left you to yourself.—You are in a kind of Erasmus Paradise; yet if you please, you may make it a purgatory; and with a little penance and my absolution, all this may turn to a good account.

*L. T.* [*Aside.*] Hold in my passion, and fall, fall a little, thou swelling heart; let me have some intermission of this rage, and one minute's coolness to dissemble.

[*She sweeps.*]

*Mel.*

*Mel.* You have been to blame — I like those tears, and hope they are of the purest kind — Penitential tears.

*L. T.* O, the scene was shifted quick before me — I had not time to think — I was surprized to see a monster in the glass, and now I find 'tis myself: Can you have mercy to forgive the faults I have imagined, but never put in practice — O consider, consider how fatal you have been to me, 'you have already killed the quiet of this 'life.' The love of you was the first wandering fire that e'er misled my steps, and while I had only that in view, I was betrayed into unthought-of ways of ruin.

*Mel.* May I believe this true?

*L. T.* O be not cruelly incredulous — How can you doubt these streaming eyes? Keep the severest eye over all my future conduct, and if I once relapse, let me not hope forgiveness, 'twill ever be in your power to ruin me — My Lord shall sign to your desires; I will myself create your happiness, and Cynthia shall be this night your bride — Do but conceal my failings, and forgive.

*Mel.* Upon such terms, I will be ever yours in every honest way.

*Maskwell softly introduces Lord Touchwood, and retires.*

*Mask.* I have kept my word; he is here, but I must not be seen.

*Ld. T.* Hell and amazement! She is in tears.

*L. T.* [*Kneeling.*] Eternal blessings thank you — Ha! My Lord listening! O, Fortune has o'erpaid me all, all! all's my own! [*Aside.*]

*Mel.* Nay, I beseech you rise.

*L. T.* [*Aloud.*] Never, never! I'll grow to the ground, be buried quick beneath it, ere I'll be consenting to so damned a sin as incest! 'unnatural incest!

*Mel.* Ha!

*L. T.* O cruel man, will you not let me go — I'll forgive all that's past — O Heaven, you will not ravish me!

*Mel.* Damnation!

*Ld. T.* Monster! Dog! your life shall answer this —

[*Draws and runs at Mel. is held by Lady Touchwood.*]

*L. T.* O Heavens, my Lord! Hold, hold, for Heaven's sake.

*Mel.* Confusion, my uncle! O, the damned forceress.

*L. T.* Moderate your rage, good my Lord! He's mad, alas, he's mad—Indeed he is my Lord, and knows not what he does—See how wild he looks.

*Mel.* By Heaven, 'twere senseless not to be mad, and see such witchcraft.

*L. T.* My Lord, you hear him, he talks idly.

*Ld. T.* Hence from my sight, thou living infamy to my name: when next I see that face, I'll write villain in it with my sword's point.

*Mel.* Now, by my soul, I will not go 'till I have made known my wrongs—Nay, 'till I have made known yours, which (if possible) are greater—though she has all the host of Hell her servants.

*L. T.* Alas, he raves! 'Talks very poetry.' For Heaven's sake away my Lord, he'll either tempt you to extravagance, or commit some himself.

*Mel.* Death and furies, will you not hear me—Why, by Heaven she laughs, grins, points to your back; she forks out cuckoldom with her fingers, and you are running horn-mad after your fortune.

[*As she is going she turns back and smiles at him.*]

*Ld. T.* I fear he's mad indeed—Let's send Maskwell to him.

*Mel.* Send him to her.

'*L. T.* Come, come, good my Lord, my heart aches so, I shall faint if I stay.' [Exit *Ld. and L. T.*]

*Mel.* Oh, I could curse my stars, fate, and chance; all causes and accidents of fortune in this life! But to what purpose? 'Yet, 'death, for a man to have the fruit of all his industry grow full and ripe, ready to drop into his mouth, and just when he holds out his hand to gather it, to have a sudden whirlwind come, tear up tree and all, and bear away the very root and foundation of his hopes; What temper can contain?' They talk of sending Maskwell to me; I never had more need of him—But what can he do? Imagination cannot form a fairer and more plausible design than this of his which has miscarried—O my precious aunt! I shall never thrive without I deal with the devil, or another woman.

'Women, like flames, have a destroying pow'r,  
'Ne'er to be quench'd 'till they themselves devour.'

[*Exit.*]

END of the FOURTH ACT.

A C T

## A C T V.

*Enter Lady Touchwood and Maskwell.*

LADY TOUCHWOOD.

WAS it not lucky?

*Mask.* Lucky! Fortune is your own, and 'tis her interest so to be; by Heaven I believe you can controul her power, and she fears it; though chance brought my Lord, 'twas your own art that turned it to advantage.

*L. T.* 'Tis true, it might have been my ruin——But yonder's my Lord, I believe he is coming to find you, I'll not be seen. [*Exit.*

*Mask.* So; I durst not own my introducing my Lord, though it succeeded well for her, for she would have suspected a design which I should have been puzzled to excuse. My Lord is thoughtful—I'll be so too; yet he shall know my thoughts; or think he does——

*Enter Lord Touchwood.*

What have I done?

*Ld. T.* Talking to himself!

*Mask.* 'Twas honest—and shall I be rewarded for it? No, 'twas honest, therefore I shall not:—Nay, rather therefore I ought not; for it rewards itself.

*Ld. T.* Unequalled virtue!

[*Aside.*

*Mask.* But should it be known! then I have lost a friend! He was an ill man, and I have gained; for half myself I lent him, and that I have recalled; so I have served myself, and what is yet better, I have served a worthy Lord, to whom I owe myself.

*Ld. T.* Excellent man!

[*Aside.*

*Mask.* Yet I am wretched—O, there is a secret burns within this breast, which, should it once blaze forth, would ruin all, consume my honest character, and brand me with the name of villain.

*Ld. T.* Ha!

*Mask.* Why do I love! Yet Heaven and my waking conscience are my witnesses, I never gave one working thought a vent, which might discover that I loved, nor ever must; no, let it prey upon my heart; for I would rather die than seem once, barely seem, once dishonest:—

O, should

O, should it once be known I love fair Cynthia, all this that I have done would look like rival's malice, false friendship to my Lord, and base self-interest. Let me perish first, and from this hour avoid all sight and speech, and, if I can, all thought of that pernicious beauty. Ha! but what is my distraction doing? I am wildly talking to myself, and some ill chance might have directed malicious ears this way. [*Seems to start, seeing my Lord.*]

*Ld. T.* Start not—let guilty and dishonest souls start at the revelation of their thoughts, but be thou fixed, as is thy virtue.

*Mask.* I am confounded, and beg your Lordship's pardon for those free discourses which I have had with myself.

*Ld. T.* Come, I beg your pardon that I over-heard you, and yet it shall not need—Honest Maskwell! Thy and my good genius led me hither—Mine, in that I have discovered so much manly virtue; thine, in that thou shalt have due reward of all thy worth. Give me thy hand—my nephew is the alone remaining branch of all our ancient family; him I thus blow away, and constitute thee in his room to be my heir—

*Mask.* Now Heaven forbid ———

*Ld. T.* No more—I have resolved—The writings are ready drawn, and wanted nothing but to be signed, and have his name inserted—Yours will fill the blank as well—I will have no reply—Let me command this time, for 'tis the last in which I will assume authority—hereafter you shall rule where I have power.

*Mask.* I humbly would petition—

*Ld. T.* Is it for yourself? [*Mask. pauses.*] I'll hear of nought for any body else.

*Mask.* Then witness Heaven for me, this wealth and honour was not of my seeking, nor would I build my fortune on another's ruin: I had but one desire—

*Ld. T.* Thou shalt enjoy it.—If all I am worth in wealth or interest can purchase Cynthia, she is thine.—I am sure Sir Paul's consent will follow fortune; I will quickly shew him which way that is going.

*Mask.* You oppress me with bounty; my gratitude is weak, and shrinks beneath the weight, and cannot rise to thank you—What, enjoy my love! Forgive the  
trans-



transports of a blessing so unexpected, so unhop'd for, so unthought of!

*Ld. T.* I will confirm it, and rejoice with thee.

[*Exit.*]

*Mask.* This is prosperous indeed!—Why, let him find me out a villain, settled in possession of a fair estate, and full fruition of my love, I'll bear the railings of a losing gamester—But should he find me out before!—'tis dangerous to delay—Let me think——Should my Lord proceed to treat openly of my marriage with Cynthia, all must be discovered, and Mellefont can be no longer blinded.—It must not be; nay, should my Lady know it——Ay, then were fine work indeed! Her fury would spare nothing, though she involved herself in ruin. No, it must be by stratagem——I must deceive Mellefont once more, and get my Lord to consent to my private management. He comes opportunely——Now will I, in my old way, discover the whole and real truth of the matter to him, that he may not suspect one word on't.

No mask like open truth to cover lies,  
As to go naked is the best disguise.

*Enter Mellefont.*

*Mel.* O, Maskwell, what hopes? I am confounded in a maze of thoughts, each leading into another, and all ending in perplexity. My uncle will not see nor hear me.

*Mask.* No matter, Sir, don't trouble your head, all is in my power.

*Mel.* How, for Heaven's sake?

*Mask.* Little do you think that your aunt has kept her word——How the devil she wrought my Lord into this dotage I know not; but he is gone to Sir Paul about my marriage with Cynthia, and has appointed me his heir.

*Mel.* The devil he has! What's to be done?

*Mask.* I have it, it must be by stratagem; for it is in vain to make application to him. I think I have that in my head which cannot fail. Where is Cynthia?

*Mel.* In the garden.

*Mask.* Let us go and consult her:—My life for yours,  
I cheat my Lord.

[*Excunt.*]

*Enter*

*Enter Lord and Lady Touchwood.*

*L. T.* Maskwell your heir, and marry Cynthia!

*Id. T.* I cannot do too much for so much merit.

*L. T.* But this is a thing of too great moment to be so suddenly resolved. Why Cynthia? Why must he be married? Is there not reward enough in raising his low fortune, but he must mix his blood with mine, and wed my niece? How know you that my brother will consent, or she? Nay, he himself perhaps may have affections elsewhere.

*Ld. T.* No, I am convinced he loves her.

*L. T.* Maskwell love Cynthia, impossible!

*Ld. T.* I tell you, he confessed it to me.

*L. T.* Confusion! How is this! [*Aside.*

*Ld. T.* His humility long stifled his passion; and his love of Mellefont would have made him still conceal it: but by encouragement I wrung the secret from him, and know he is no way to be rewarded but in her. I will defer my farther proceedings in it 'till you have considered it: but remember how we are both indebted to him.

[*Exit.*

*L. T.* Both indebted to him! Yes, we are both indebted to him, if you knew all, 'villain!' Oh, I am wild with this surprize of treachery: it is impossible, it cannot be—He love Cynthia! 'What, have I been 'bawd to his designs!' his property only, 'a baiting-place! Now I see what made him false to Mellefont---' Shame and distraction! I cannot bear it, Oh! What 'woman can bear to be a property? To be kindled to a 'flame, only to light him to another's arms: Oh! that 'I were fire indeed, that I might burn the vile traitor.' What shall I do? How shall I think? I cannot think—All my designs are lost, my love unfated, my revenge unfinished, and fresh cause of fury from unthought-of plagues.

*Enter Sir Paul.*

*Sir P.* Madam, sister, my Lady sister, did you see my Lady, my wife?

*L. T.* Oh! Torture!

*Sir P.* Gads-bud, I cannot find her high nor low; Where can she be, think you?

*L. T.* Where she is serving you as all your sex ought

to be served ; making you a beast. Don't you know that you are a fool, brother ?

*Sir P.* A fool ; he, he, he, you are merry—No, no, not I, I know no such matter.

*L. T.* Why then you don't know half your happiness.

*Sir P.* That's a jest with all my heart, faith and troth—But hark ye, my Lord told me something of a revolution of things ; I don't know what to make on't——Gads-bud I must consult my wife——He talks of disinheriting his nephew, and I don't know what——Look you, sister, I must know what my girl has to trust to ; or not a syllable of a wedding, Gads-bud——to shew you that I am not a fool.

*L. T.* Hear me ; consent to the breaking off this marriage, and the promoting any other, without consulting me, and I will renounce all blood, all relation and concern with you for ever——Nay, I'll be your enemy, and pursue you to destruction ; I'll tear your eyes out, and tread you under my feet.——

*Sir P.* Why, what's the matter now ? Good Lord, what's all this for ? Pooh, here's a joke indeed——Why, where's my wife ?

*L. T.* With Careless, in the close arbour ; he may want you by this time, as much as you want her.

*Sir P.* Oh, if she be with Mr. Careless, 'tis well enough.

*L. T.* Fool, sot, insensible ox ! But remember what I said to you, or you had better eat your own horns, by this light you had.

*Sir P.* You are a passionate woman, Gads-bud——But to say truth, all our family are choleric ; I am the only peaceable person amongst them. [ *Exeunt.*

*Enter Mellefont, Maskwell, and Cynthia.*

*Mel.* I know no other way but this he has proposed ; if you have love enough to run the venture.

*Cyn.* I don't know whether I have love enough——but I find I have obstinacy enough to pursue whatever I have once resolved ; and a true female courage to oppose any thing that resists my will, though it were reason itself.

*Mask.* That's right——Well, I'll secure the writings, and run the hazard along with you.

*Cyn.*

*Cyn.* But how can the coach and six horses be got ready without suspicion?

*Mask.* Leave it to my care; that shall be so far from being suspected, that it shall be got ready by my Lord's own order.

*Mel.* How?

*Mask.* Why, I intend to tell my Lord the whole matter of our contrivance, that's my way.

*Mel.* I do not understand you.

*Mask.* Why, I'll tell my Lord I laid this plot with you on purpose to betray you; and that which put me upon it, was the finding it impossible to gain the lady any other way, but in the hopes of her marrying you.

*Mel.* So.——

*Mask.* So, why so, while you are busied in making yourself ready, I'll wheedle her into the coach; and instead of you, borrow my Lord's chaplain, and so run away with her myself.

*Mel.* O, I conceive you, you'll tell him so.

*Mask.* Tell him so! Ay, why, you don't think I mean to do so.

*Mel.* No, no; ha, ha, I dare swear thou wilt not.

*Mask.* Therefore, for our farther security I would have you disguised like a parson, that if my Lord should have curiosity to peep, he may not discover you in the coach, but think the cheat is carried on as he would have it.

*Mel.* Excellent Maskwell! thou wert certainly meant for a statesman or a Jesuit——but thou art too honest for one, and too pious for the other.

*Mask.* Well, get yourselves ready, and meet me in half an hour yonder in my Lady's dressing-room; go by the back-stairs, and so we may slip down without being observed——I'll send the chaplain to you with his robes; I have made him my own—and ordered him to meet us to-morrow morning at St. Albans; there we will sum up this account to all our satisfactions.

*Mel.* Should I begin to thank or praise thee, I should waste the little time we have. [Exit.]

*Mask.* Madam, you will be ready.

*Cyn.* I will be punctual to the minute.

[Going.  
Mask.]

*Mask.* Stay, I have a doubt—Upon second thoughts, we had better meet in the chaplain's chamber here, the corner chamber at this end of the gallery; there is a back way into it, so that you need not come through this door—and a pair of private stairs leading down to the stables——It will be more convenient.

*Cyn.* I am guided by you—but Mellefont will mistake.

*Mask.* No, no, I'll after him immediately, and tell him.

*Cyn.* I will not fail. [Exit.]

*Mask.* Why, *qui vult decipi decipiatur*.—'Tis no fault of mine, I have told them in plain terms how easy it is for me to cheat them; and if they will not hear the serpent's hiss, they must be stung into experience and future caution.—Now to prepare my Lord to consent to this.—But first I must instruct my little Levite; there is no plot, public or private, that can expect to prosper without one of them has a finger in it; he promised me to be within at this hour—Mr. Saygrace, Mr. Saygrace. [Goes to the chamber door, and knocks.]

[Mr. Saygrace looking out.] Sweet Sir, I will but pen the last line of an acrostick, and be with you in the twinkling of an ejaculation, in the pronouncing of an *Amen*, or before you can——

*Mask.* Nay, good Mr. Saygrace, do not prolong the time by describing to me the shortness of your stay; rather, if you please, defer the finishing of your wit, and let us talk about our business; it shall be tithes in your way.

*Enter Saygrace.*

*Sayg.* You shall prevail; I would break off in the middle of a sermon to do you a pleasure.

*Mask.* You could not do me a greater——except——the business in hand——Have you provided a habit for Mellefont?

*Sayg.* I have; they are ready in my chamber, together with a clean starched band and cuffs.

*Mask.* Good: let them be carried to him——Have you stitched the gown-sleeve, that he may be puzzled, and waste time in putting it on?

*Sayg.* I have; the gown will not be induced without perplexity.

*Mask.* Meet me in half an hour, here in your own chamber. When Cynthia comes, let there be no light; and do not speak, that she may not distinguish you from Mellefont. I'll urge haste to excuse your silence.

*Sayg.* You have no more commands?

*Mask.* None, your text is short.

*Sayg.* But pithy, and I will handle it with discretion.

*Mask.* It will be the first you have so served. [*Exeunt.*

*Enter Lord Touchwood and Maskwell.*

*Ld. T.* Sure I was born to be controuled by those I should command: my very slaves will shortly give me rules how I shall govern them.

*Mask.* I am concerned to see your Lordship discomposed——

*Ld. T.* Have you seen my wife lately, or disobliged her?

*Mask.* No, my Lord.—What can this mean?

[*Aside.*

*Ld. T.* Then Mellefont has urged somebody to incense her——Something she has heard of you, which carries her beyond the bounds of patience.

*Mask.* This I feared. [*Aside.*] Did not your Lordship tell her of the honours you designed me?

*Ld. T.* Yes.

*Mask.* 'Tis that; you know my Lady has a high spirit, she thinks I am unworthy.

*Ld. T.* Unworthy! 'Tis an ignorant pride in her to think so——Honesty to me is true nobility. However, 'tis my will it shall be so, and that should be convincing to her as much as reason——By Heaven, I'll not be wife-ridden! Were it possible, it should be done this night.

*Mask.* By Heaven he meets my wishes! [*Aside.*] Few things are impossible to willing minds.

*Ld. T.* Instruct me how this may be done, you shall see I want no inclination.

*Mask.* I had laid a small design for to-morrow (as love will be inventing) which I thought to communicate to your Lordship——But it may be as well done to-night.

*Ld. T.* Here is company——Come this way, and tell me.

[*Exeunt.*

*Enter*

*Enter Careless and Cynthia.*

*Care.* Is not that he, now gone out with my Lord?

*Cyn.* Yes.

*Care.* By Heaven there's treachery——The confusion that I saw your father in, my Lady Touchwood's passion, with what imperfectly I overheard between my Lord and her, confirm me in my fears. Where's Mellefont?

*Cyn.* Here he comes.

*Enter Mellefont.*

——Did Maskwell tell you any thing of the chaplain's chamber?

*Mel.* No; my dear, will you get ready?—The things are all in my chamber; I want nothing but the habit.

*Care.* You are betrayed, and Maskwell is the villain I always thought him.

*Cyn.* When you were gone, he said his mind was changed, and bid me meet him in the chaplain's room, pretending immediately to follow you, and give you notice.

*Care.* There's Saygrace tripping by with a bundle under his arm—He cannot be ignorant that Maskwell means to use his chamber; let's follow and examine him.

*Mel.* 'Tis loss of time——I cannot think him false.

*[Exit Mel. and Care.]*

*Enter Lord Touchwood.*

*Cyn.* My Lord musing!

*Ld. T.* He has a quick invention, if this were suddenly designed——Yet he says he had prepared my chaplain already:

*Cyn.* How is this! Now I fear, indeed.

*Ld. T.* Cynthia here! Alone, fair cousin, and melancholy?

*Cyn.* Your Lordship was thoughtful.

*Ld. T.* My thoughts were on serious business, not worth your hearing.

*Cyn.* Mine were on treachery concerning you, and may be worth your hearing.

*Ld. T.* Treachery concerning me! Pray, be plain——Hark! What noise!

*Mask.* *[Within.]* Will you not hear me?

*Lady T.* *[Within.]* No, monster! Traitor! No.

*Cyn.* My Lady and Maskwell! This may be lucky---  
My Lord, let me intreat you to stand behind this screen,  
and listen; perhaps this chance may give you proof of  
what you never could have believed from my suspicions.

*Enter Lady Touchwood, with a dagger, and Maskwell:*

*Cynthia and Lord Touchwood abscond, listening.*

*L. T.* You want but leisure to invent fresh falsehood,  
and sooth me to a fond belief of all your fictions; but I  
will stab the lie that's forming in your heart, and save a  
sin in pity to your soul.

*Mask.* Strikethen---since you will have it so.

*L. T.* Ha! a steady villain to the last!

*Mask.* Come, why do you dally with me thus?

*L. T.* Thy stubborn temper shocks me, and you  
know it would---This is cunning all, and not cou-  
rage; no, I know thee well---But thou shalt miss  
thy aim.

*Mask.* Ha, ha, ha.

*L. T.* Ha! Do you mock my rage? Then this shall  
punish your fond, rash contempt! Again smile!

*[Goes to strike.*

And such a smile as speaks in ambiguity!

Ten thousand meanings lurk in each corner of that va-  
rious face.

O! that they were written in thy heart,

That I, with this, might lay thee open to my fight!

But then 'twill be too late to know---

Thou hast, thou hast found the only way to turn my  
rage; too well thou knowest my jealous soul could never  
bear uncertainty. Speak then, and tell me---Yet are  
you silent? Oh, I am wildered in all passions! But thus  
my anger melts. *[Weeps.]* Here, take this poniard, for  
my very spirits faint, and I want strength to hold it,  
thou hast disarmed my soul. *[Gives the dagger.*

*Ld. T.* Amazement shakes me---Where will this end?

*Mask.* So 'tis well---let your wild fury have a vent,  
and when you have temper, tell me.

*L. T.* Now, now, now I am calm, and can hear you.

*Mask.* *[Aside.]* Thanks, my invention: and now I have  
it for you.---First tell me, what urged you to this vio-  
lence? For your passion broke out in such imperfect  
terms, that yet I am to learn the cause.

*L. T.*



*L. T.* My Lord himself surprized me with the news, you were to marry Cynthia—That you had owned your love to him, and his indulgence would assist you to attain your ends.

*Cyn.* How, my Lord!

*Ld. T.* Pray forbear all resentments for a while, and let us hear the rest.

*Mask.* I grant you in appearance all is true; I seemed consenting to my Lord; nay, transported with the blessing—But could you think that I, who had been happy in your loved embraces, could e'er be fond of inferior slavery?

*Cyn.* Nay, good my Lord, forbear resentment, let us hear it out.

*Ld. T.* Yes, I will contain, though I could burst.

*Mask.* I that had wantoned in the rich circle of your world of love, could be confined within the puny province of a girl? No—Yet tho' I dote on each last favour more than all the rest, though I would give a limb for every look you cheaply throw away on any other object of your love; yet so far I prize your pleasures o'er my own, that all this seeming plot that I have laid, has been to gratify your taste, and cheat the world, to prove a faithful rogue to you.

*L. T.* If this were true—But how can it be?

*Mask.* I have so contrived, that Mellefont will presently, in the chaplain's habit, wait for Cynthia in your dressing-room: but I have put the change upon her, that she may be elsewhere employed—Do you procure her night-gown, and with your hoods tied over your face, meet him in her stead; you may go privately by the back-stairs, and, unperceived, there you may propose to reinstate him in his uncle's favour, if he will comply with your desires; his case is desperate, and I believe he'll yield to any conditions—If not, here, take this; you may employ it better than in the heart of one who is nothing when not yours. [Gives the dagger.]

*L. T.* Thou canst deceive every body—Nay, thou hast deceived me; but 'tis as I would wish—Trusty villain! I could worship thee.——

*Mask.* No more—it wants but a few minutes of the time; and Mellefont's love will carry him there before his hour.

*L. T.* I go, I fly, incomparable Maskwell! [*Exit.*

*Mask.* So, this was a pinch indeed; my invention was upon the rack, and made discovery of her last plot: I hope Cynthia and my chaplain will be ready. I'll prepare for the expedition. [*Exit.*

*Cynthia and Lord Touchwood come forward.*

*Cyn.* Now, my Lord!

*Ld. T.* Astonishment binds up my rage! Villainy upon villainy! Heavens, what a long track of dark deceit has this discovered! I am confounded when I look back, and want a clue to guide me through the various mazes of unheard-of treachery. My wife! Damnation! My Hell!

*Cyn.* My Lord, have patience, and be sensible how great our happiness is, that this discovery was not made too late.

*Ld. T.* I thank you, yet it may be still too late, if we don't presently prevent the execution of their plots:—Ha! I'll do it. Where is Mellefont, my poor injured nephew? How shall I make him ample satisfaction?

*Cyn.* I dare answer for him.

*Ld. T.* I do him fresh wrong to question his forgiveness, for I know him to be all goodness—Yet my wife! Damn her—She'll think to meet him in that dressing-room—Was't not so? And Maskwell will expect you in the chaplain's chamber—For once I'll add my plot too—let us haste to find out, and inform my nephew; and do you, quickly as you can, bring all the company into this gallery.—I'll expose the strumpet and the villain. [*Exeunt.*

*Enter Lord Froth and Sir Paul.*

*Ld. F.* By Heavens, I have slept an age—Sir Paul, what o'clock is it? Past eight, on my conscience, my Lady's is the most inviting couch, and a slumber there is the prettiest amusement! But where is all the company?

*Sir P.* The company, Gad's-bud, I don't know, my Lord; but here's the strangest revolution, all turned topsy-turvy, as I hope for Providence.

*Ld. F.* O Heavens! What's the matter? Where is my wife?

*Sir P.* All turned topsy-turvy, as sure as a gun.

*Ld. F.* How do you mean? My wife!

*Sir. P.*

*Sir P.* The strangest posture of affairs!

*Ld. F.* What, my wife?

*Sir P.* No, no, I mean the family. Your Lady's affairs may be in a very good posture; I saw her go into the garden with Mr. Brisk.

*Ld. F.* How? Where, when, what to do?

*Sir P.* I suppose they have been laying their heads together.

*Ld. F.* How?

*Sir P.* Nay, only about poetry, I suppose, my Lord; making couplets.

*Ld. F.* Couplets.

*Sir P.* O, here they come.

*Enter Lady Froth and Brisk.*

*Brisk.* My Lord, your humble servant; Sir Paul, yours ——— The finest night!

*L. F.* My dear, Mr. Brisk and I have been star-gazing I don't know how long.

*Sir P.* Does it not tire your Ladyship? Are not you weary with looking up?

*L. F.* Oh, no! I love it violently ——— My dear, you are melancholy.

*Ld. F.* No, my dear, I am but just awake.

*L. F.* Snuff some of my spirit of hartshorn.

*Ld. F.* I have some of my own, thank you, my dear.

*L. F.* Well, I swear, Mr. Brisk, you understood astronomy like an old Egyptian.

*Brisk.* Not comparably to your Ladyship; you are the very Cynthia of the skies, and queen of stars.

*L. F.* That's because I have no light, but what's by reflexion from you, who are the sun.

*Brisk.* Madam, you have eclipsed me quite, let me perish ——— I cannot answer that.

*L. F.* No matter ——— Harkee, shall you and I make an almanack together?

*Brisk.* With all my soul, ——— Your Ladyship has made me the man in it already, I am so full of the wounds which you have given.

*L. F.* O, finely taken! I swear now you are even with me; O Parnassus, you have an infinite deal of wit.

*Sir P.* So he has, Gads-bud, and so has your Ladyship.

*Enter*

30 THE DOUBLE DEALER.

*Enter Lady Plyant, Careless, and Cynthia.*

*L. P.* You tell me most surprizing things ; blefs me, who would ever trust a man ? O, my heart achs for fear they should be all deceitful alike.

*Care.* You need not fear, Madam, you have charms to fix inconstancy itself.

*L. P.* O dear, you make me blush.

*Ld. F.* Come, my dear, shall we take leave of my Lord and Lady ?

*Cyn.* They'll wait upon your Lordship presently:

*L. F.* Mr. Brisk, my coach shall set you down.

*All.* What's the matter ?

*[A great shriek from the corner of the stage.*

*Enter Lady Touchwood, and runs out affrighted, my Lord after her, like a parson.*

*L. T.* O, I'm betrayed——Save me, help me !

*Ld. T.* Now what evasion, strumpet ?

*L. T.* Stand off, let me go.

*Ld. T.* Go, and thy own infamy pursue thee----You stare as you were all amazed——I do not wonder at it, ——But too soon you'll know mine, and that woman's shame.

*Enter Mellefont, disguised in a parson's habit, and pulling in Maskwell.*

*Mel.* Nay, by Heaven you shall be seen——Careless, your hand—Do you hold down your head ? Yes, I am your chaplain ; look in the face of your injured friend, thou wonder of all falshood.

*Ld. T.* Are you silent, monster ?

*Mel.* Good Heavens ! How I believed and loved this man !—Take him hence, for he is a disease to my sight.

*Ld. T.* Secure that manifold villain.

*[Servants seize him.*

*Care.* Miracle of ingratitude !

*Brisk.* This is all very surprizing, let me perish.

*L. F.* You know I told you Saturn looked a little more angry than usual.

*Ld. T.* We'll think of punishment at leisure, but let me hasten to do justice, in rewarding virtue and wronged innocence.—Nephew, I hope I have your pardon, and Cynthia's.

*Mel.* We are your Lordship's creatures.

*Ld. T.*

*Ld. T.* And be each other's comfort :----Let me join your hands——Unwearied nights, and wishing days attend you both ; mutual love, lasting health, and circling joys, tread round each happy year of your long lives.

Let secret villainy from hence be warn'd ;  
 Howe'er in private mischiefs are conceiv'd,  
 Torture and shame attend their open birth :  
 Like vipers in the womb, base treachery lies  
 Still gnawing that whence first it did arise ;  
 No sooner born, but the vile parent dies.

}  
 [*Exeunt.*]

END of the FIFTH ACT.



## E P I L O G U E.

**C**OULD poets but foresee how plays would take,  
 Then they could tell what epilogues to make;  
 Whether to thank or blame their audience most:  
 But that late knowledge does much hazard cost,  
 'Till dice are thrown, there's nothing won, nor lost.  
 So 'till the thief has stol'n, he cannot know  
 Whether he shall escape the law, or no.  
 But poets run much greater hazards far,  
 Than they who stand their trials at the bar;  
 The law provides a curb for its own fury,  
 And suffers judges to direct the jury.  
 But in this court, what diff'rence does appear!  
 For every one's both judge and jury here;  
 Nay, and what's worse, an executioner.  
 All have a right and title to some part,  
 Each choosing that in which he has most art.  
 The dreadful men of learning all confound,  
 Unless the fable's good, and moral sound.  
 The vizard-masks that are in pit and gallery,  
 Approve or damn the repartee and raillery.  
 The lady critics, who are better read,  
 Inquire if characters are nicely bred;  
 If the soft things are penn'd and spoke with grace:  
 They judge of action too, and time, and place;  
 In which we do not doubt but they're discerning,  
 For that's a kind of assignation learning.  
 Beaus judge of dress; the wittlings judge of songs;  
 The cuckoldom, of ancient right, to Cits belongs.  
 Thus poor poets the favour are deny'd,  
 Even to make exceptions, when they're try'd.  
 'Tis hard that they must every one admit:  
 Methinks I see some faces in the pit,  
 Which must of consequence be foes to wit.  
 You who can judge, to sentence may proceed;  
 But tho' he cannot write, let him be freed,  
 At least, from their contempt who cannot read.

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